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ABSTRACT

The two basic family feeding programs are food stamps and commodity distribution. The current food stamp program provides the poor with spending power enough to purchase at the level of the Department of Agriculture's Economy Food Plan. The dollar equivalent of this plan is 112 dollars a month for a family of four. This amounts to an average per person Federal subsidy or bonus of $13.45 per month, or 14.7 cents per meal. From January 1970 (when the food plan was $106), to July 1972 (when the food plan went to $112), the consumer price index for food consumed at home went up at a rate of 300 percent greater than the rise in the allotment. The Department of Agriculture, however, in 1968 had described the Economy Food Plan "as not a reasonable measure of basic money needs for a good diet." The diet of the three million people who are enrolled in the commodity distribution program would not be entirely adequate even if all received their full allotment of slightly over 37 pounds of canned and boxed goods each month. They would obtain at least 100 percent of the Recommended Daily Allowance of protein and six minerals and vitamins, but only 80 percent of needed calories. In fact, the program, however, distributes an average of 28.2 pounds of food each month, or 74 percent of the promised items by weight. (Author/JM)

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Hunger U.S.A. Revisited

A Report by the Citizens' Board of Inquiry into Hunger and Malnutrition in the United States

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The Citizens' Board of Inquiry, lacking a staff of its own, asked the National Council on Hunger and Malnutrition and the Southern Regional Council, both active organizations in the field of nutrition since 1968, to assist in the writing and the editing of this work. *John Kramer* of the National Council is the principal author and researcher. *Robert E. Anderson, Jr.*, of the Southern Regional Council, served as editor.

Introduction

In 1967 and 1968 this Citizens' Board undertook an investigation of the extent of hunger and malnutrition in poverty areas throughout the United States. Our findings, published in HUNGER U.S.A. in April, 1968, charged:*

1. Hunger and malnutrition exist in this country affecting millions of Americans and increasing in severity from year to year.
2. Hunger and malnutrition take their toll in the form of infant deaths, organic brain damage, retarded growth and learning rates, increased vulnerability to disease, withdrawal, apathy, alienation, frustration, and violence.
3. There is a shocking absence of exact knowledge in this country about the extent and severity of malnutrition—a lack of information and action which stands in marked contrast to our own recorded knowledge of other countries.
4. Federal food programs have left out a significant portion of the poor and have not adequately helped those they did reach.
5. The failure of federal efforts to feed the poor cannot be divorced from our nation's agricultural policy, the Congressional committees that dictate that policy, and the Department of Agriculture that implements it; for hunger and malnutrition in a country of abundance must be seen as consequences of a political and economic system that spends billions to remove food from the market, to limit production, to retire land from production, to guarantee and sustain profits for large producers of basic crops.

The immediate response to our report was, for the most part, one of incredulity, although there were among newspapers and political leaders some outstanding exceptions. But some of the most powerful members of Congress, as well as members of the administration, reacted angrily. Indeed, that remained the prevailing official attitude until early 1969. At that time Sen. Ernest Hollings of South Carolina, after a visit to impoverished homes in his state's low country, forthrightly acknowledged the widespread existence of hunger and malnutrition in terms and with an insistence that could not be avoided.

Writing now, in 1972, it is no longer necessary to debate the issue. Like too many other problems of American society, it has been officially acknowledged, described and defined and left unsolved. The most authoritative description has come from the federal government itself in what is now called the Ten State Nutrition Survey.

In summary, the survey, based on actual examinations of 40,000 poor people and demographic data obtained from 24,000 low income families, showed that high percentages of the survey sampled were either malnourished or else at high risk of developing nutritional problems. It also brought out, at least by implication, some important associated findings such as the need for basic health services, and the relationship between ill health and problems in the environment, including poor housing and sanitation.

In the low income states (Texas, Louisiana, Kentucky, West Virginia, and South Carolina) 15.6 per cent of whites, 37.4 per cent of blacks and 20.6 per cent of Spanish-Americans showed either deficient or low levels of hemoglobin, an index of anemia.

In those same states 8.8 per cent of whites, 11 per cent of blacks, and 7.8 per cent of Spanish-Americans had deficient or low levels of Vitamin C.

Deficient or low levels of riboflavin in low income states were as follows: whites, 10.5 per cent; blacks, 27.1 per cent; Spanish-Americans, 19.6 per cent.

Low protein levels in the same states were recorded for 8.3 per cent of whites; 9.5 per cent of blacks; and 11.2 per cent of Spanish-Americans.

For high income states (California, Washington, Michigan, New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut) the percentage breakdowns in the various categories were as follows:

Deficient or low hemoglobin: whites, 9.4 per cent; blacks 26.9 per cent; Spanish-Americans, 17.7 per cent.

Deficient or low levels of vitamin C: whites, 3.0 per cent; blacks, 2.9 per cent; Spanish-Americans, 1.9 per cent.

Deficient or low levels of riboflavin: whites, 6.9 per cent; blacks, 13.7 per cent; Spanish-Americans, 6.7 per cent.

Deficient or low protein levels: whites, 2.3 per cent; blacks, 2.7 per cent; Spanish-Americans, .7 per cent.

This convincing data, although lacking accompanying interpretive commentary making it readily understandable to the lay reader, and buried as it is in the body of an 800 page document, had been long in coming. In December, 1967, Dr. Arnold Schaefer was appointed to direct the National Nutrition Survey on the nutritional status of low-income persons in ten states (Texas, Louisiana, New York, Kentucky, Michigan, California, Washington, South Carolina, West Virginia, and Massachusetts). Our 1968 report referred to that survey and pointed out that it could not "realistically be expected to be completed before the close of 1968, at the earliest," although the legislation that authorized it had called for its completion by mid-1968.

When Dr. Schaefer testified in January, 1969, before the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Related Human Needs about his preliminary findings of widespread malnutrition among the poor in Texas and Louisiana, he was front page news across the country. Those who had urged larger food assistance programs at last had the scientific confirmation of need. Dr. Schaefer kept the momentum of

*See Appendix 3

his disclosures alive by numerous speeches on the preliminary findings of his survey.

Abruptly in July, 1969, the survey was removed from Dr. Schaefer's administration in Washington and relocated in the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia. In April, 1970, when Dr. Schaefer was again called to testify before the Senate Committee he was under strict orders to state facts without any interpretation. He revealed his unhappiness over this to newsmen, but was constrained by his position. Funds for the survey were routed to various other purposes; data on the people tested came in slowly; the use of computers was restricted. Finally, most of Dr. Schaefer's staff left with the final results untabulated. Sen. Hollings complained publicly that the survey was being kept secret in Atlanta. CDC issued a denial and declared that the full survey would be released within thirty days. The report as released from CDC a few weeks later, however, was described as "A Preliminary Report to the Congress."

Senators McGovern and Hollings noted discrepancies in what was released by CDC and the findings previously revealed by Dr. Schaefer. McGovern said the CDC report was "tailored to blunt the harsh edges of what the findings may actually have revealed." He pointed out that earlier five state findings were missing from the report. These findings had listed far more multiple nutritional deficiencies than the CDC version. The initial version, McGovern said, found that from state to state the range of all subjects with two or more "unacceptable" biochemical values was from 1.1 per cent to 32 per cent. The CDC report, McGovern noted, did not indicate the state-to-state range, but found 4.2 per cent with multiple deficiencies and rejected the earlier reports's use of the term "Unacceptable."

Dr. Schaefer, meanwhile, gave an interview to the *Washington Post* in which he pointed out other discrepancies as well. He said the CDC report understated the extent and seriousness of anemia. "In the sample we studied," he said, "one person out of four was classified as a risk for anemia. I can't get that out of this document." The report as released, Schaefer said, also included data on only four nutrients, "leaving out serum albumin and thiamin, both important." He said much of the data on Texas and Louisiana was omitted due to the fact that "survey headquarters was moved from Washington to Atlanta over my objection, and all the computer programs have to be re-done for a new computer." He said he had warned his superiors in HEW that the move to Atlanta would cause a delay "of at least a year."

After his interview, Dr. Schaefer, who already had been put on detached service with the Pan American Health Organization, according to newspaper accounts was warned that he would be fired before his pension vested should he speak out again. He has not publicly done so since.

Why were Dr. Schaefer and the many nutritionists who worked with him, treated so? Why were governmental figures loath to have the reality of the most fundamental of human problems detailed at a time of great national and world-wide public interest? Why would scientists within the government join in suppressing the work of one of their own?

If answers to those questions could be found, would they be but part of a larger and tragically missing answer, which would explain why Americans and their government tolerate hunger, poverty, and suffering year after year, decade after decade? Are we truly, as we like to claim and believe we are, a compassionate people? Or are we, essentially and truly, a people who can and do self-righteously demand a "work ethic" for the poor and hungry while allowing a "welfare ethic" and providing guaranteed incomes for the giants of agri-business?

Why? Why do we allow the desperate needs of our poor to go unmet? We can offer no clear answer. Perhaps it has something to do with the nature of the poor, the extent to which they are black, young, elderly, female. Perhaps it has something to do with our moral disapproval of those who are unable to survive in a "free enterprise" system, with our scorn for those who need our help even as we grudgingly give it. Perhaps.

All we know is the physical and psychological impact our failure to solve this problem has had and will continue to have. Dr. Schaefer and his colleagues have provided us with the tangible proof of the malnutrition of millions of Americans. As to the more intangible harm, Dr. Bruno Bettelheim, the eminent child psychiatrist, has put into compelling prose the view that food in our culture is closely identified with love and that there can be no adequate nurture where the person being fed feels that the supplier is dealing with him either on an impersonal, mechanical basis or else belittling him at the same time as he provides:

> Eating and being fed are intimately connected with our deepest feelings. They are the most basic interactions between human beings, on which rest all later evaluations of ourself, of the world, and of our relationship to it. Therefore anything that rubs it in that we are not given food in the right way, with the right emotions, questions on the deepest level our views of ourselves and of those who give it to us. That is why food given by the school without due regard to the child's self-respect poisons his relation to school and learning . . .*

* * *

Members of the Citizens Board of Inquiry feel privileged to have been able to do the work we did, and have therefore no personal complaints to recite. But it may be revealingly important to record that we likewise were visited with some of the infuriated treatment given Dr. Schaefer and his associates. In a disturbing manifestation of the seemingly growing tendency of our government to strike back at those who criticize it, Chairman Jamie Whitten of the House Agriculture Committee Appropriations Subcommittee employed numerous FBI agents, in addition to regular committee investigators, to interview those persons anywhere in the nation who had talked to members of this Board at hearings or had given us the photographs that were in our report. The agents questioned the poor intensively. Later Chairman Whitten expressed incredulity that anyone could interpret the investigations as intimidating to the poor. The investigators gave Congress a 108 page report, allegedly on the operation of federal food programs, but basically seeking to discredit

*Bruno Bettelheim, Food to Nurture the Mind: *The Children's Foundation. 1970.*

our evidence and our witnesses as well as those who had appeared on the CBS-TV documentary, "Hunger in America."

Nor was this the only such manifestation of the government's retaliatory instincts. The Institute of Defense Analysis —of all people—issued a report critical of our findings, criticisms that were thin in concept and valueless. It went, first of all, to 20 high officials of the Department of Defense, beginning with General Westmoreland. And, as late as 1971, Vice President Spiro Agnew went out of his way to ressurrect the buried issue of the accuracy of the CBS-TV documentary "Hunger in America", and the Office of Economic Opportunity thereupon immediately withdrew it from its library and refused to circulate it to community groups.

When the findings of a report by the Bureau of the Budget on the social cost of malnutrition in the United States, and the need for an incremental investment of approximately three billion dollars to eliminate it, were publicized in the press, efforts were made to prevent the report's ever becoming available to the general public.

We can only hope that the government this time will address its funds and energies to remedying the program defects rather than berating critics.

I.
An Overview

Undeniably progress has been made. This country, for instance, has spent well over six times as much as before our 1968 report (from $687 million in fiscal 1967 to 4.32 billion in fiscal 1973) in an attempt to guarantee the nutritional well-being of poor people. It has more than quadrupled the number of recipients of food stamps (from 2.5 million to 11.8 million) and nearly quadrupled the number of children fed a free or reduced price lunch (from 2.3 million to 8.4 million). These are heartening achievements. They illustrate, too, that the present administration, far more than was true of its predecessor, has had a willingness to move forward.

The increase in federal food program participation since 1968 can be seen in the tables on the following pages.

If we were reviewing here a matter such as increased federal highway construction, or any other materially-centered government project in which statistics provide the only measure of success, failure or commitment, we could take pride in this data, and look with confidence and composure at the job still to be done. *For there are still 26 million Americans living at or below federally-defined poverty levels and who, therefore, cannot afford to purchase an adequate diet; and over 11.2 million of them receive no help whatever from any federal food program.*

But we are considering something infinitely more complex, more profound. We are considering hunger and its debilitating effects on human personality, growth, and development, considerations deserving the highest priority in a civilized nation. And what is at issue, as much as the will of this administration, or any administration, to take action, is the humanity of and the swift ability of our methods.

THE BUDGETARY PROGRESS OF FEDERAL FOOD PROGRAMS— A SIX-YEAR REVIEW SINCE THE CREATION OF THE BOARD OF INQUIRY

(all figures in millions; all figures represent budget obligations or actual program costs, whichever is more appropriate)

All of the programs listed with the exception of I-5, Emergency Food and Medical Services, are administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. I-5 is operated by the Office of Economic Opportunity. While many Government agencies have large food expenditures (e.g. Department of Defense), the only other food-providing programs to which poor people have access because of their poverty are child-feeding projects funded under Title I, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Head Start, Johnson-O'Malley Act, Title I-ESEA (migrants), Title I-ESEA (handicapped), Follow Through, and Model Cities. These currently provide food funds in the $75 to $90 million range overall.

Project	Fiscal Years 1967(act.)	1968(act.)	1969(act.)	1970(act.)	1971(act.)	1972(act.)	1973(est.)	1973 - 1967
I. FAMILY FEEDING PROGRAMS (Total)	236.4	403.5	592.1	927.7	1,965.2	2,247.2	2,896.6	12 Times
1. Food Stamps								
a. Bonus Costs	105.5	173.1	223.7	551	1,523.1	1,790	2,400	23 Times
b. Administrative Costs — Federal	10.5	12.4	21.6	27	53.8	80	100	10 Times
2. Direct Distribution								
a. Program Costs	102.8	181.3	269.7	247.4	285.7	290	302.4	3 Times
b. Administrative Costs Federal (including assistance to states)	3.4	4	7.9	21.1	22.5	23.9	20.9	6 Times
3. Nutritional Supplements (Packages/ Certificates for Mothers and Children)	—	—	8.1	13.7	15	16.1	16.1	—
4. Direct Distribution to Institutions	14.2	19.7	32.1	21.4	20	27.2	27.2	2 Times
5. Emergency Food and Medical Services	—	13	24	46.1	45.2	20.0	30.0	—
II. CHILD FEEDING PROGRAMS (Total)	450.7	501.5	621.8	722	979.3	1,157.7	1,426.9	3 Times
1. General School Lunch	147.7	154.7	161.2	168	225.8	244	274.7	2 Times
2. Special Assistance for Free and Reduced Price Lunches	2	4.9	42	132	309.2	434.5	587.7	244 Times
3. School Breakfast	.6	2	5.5	10.9	20.2	20.1	52.5	88 Times
4. Equipment	.7	.7	10.2	16.7	37.2	14.4	16.1	23 Times
5. Meals for Day-care Centers and Recreation Programs	—	—	3.2	7.3	21	35.3	74	—
6. Special Milk	100.2	102.5	102.5	102.1	93.3	93.4	97.1	—
7. Administrative Expenses—Federal and State	1.7	2.6	5.1	8.8	10.6	9.0	10.1	6 Times
8. Commodities	197.8	234.1	292.1	276.2	262	306.6	313.7	1.6 Times
9. Nutritional Training	—	—	—	—	—	.4	1.0	
III. FUNDS RETURNED TO TREASURY	204.7	228.7	29	30.3	1.7	469.1*	?	
IV. TOTAL ALL FEEDING PROGRAMS	687.1	905	1,213.9	1,649.7	2,944.6	3,466.3**	4,323.5	5.3 Times

*Includes $418 million in unused food stamp appropriations and $51.1 million for commodity distribution.

**Includes $61.4 million of general school lunch, special assistance and breakfast outlays not broken down by progam.

FAMILY FOOD PROGRAM STATISTICS

	FOOD STAMPS			COMMODITY DISTRIBUTION	
	Participants	Cost of Bonus Stamps (millions)	Projects	Participants	Projects
1961 (FY)*	50,000	.381	6	6,384,000	Unavail.
1962 (FY)	151,000	13,153	8	7,443,000	Unavail.
1963 (FY)	359,000	18.640	42	7,019,000	Unavail.
1964 (FY)	392,000	28.644	43	6,135,000	Unavail.
1965 (FY)	633,000	32.505	110	5,842,000	Unavail.
1966 (FY)	1,218,000	64.813	324	4,770,000	Unavail.
1967 (FY)	1,832,000	105.550	836	3,722,000	Unavail.
1968 (FY)	2,488,000	173.137	1,027	3,491,000	Unavail.
Dec. 1968	2,822,000	18.401	unknown	3,660,000	1,243
Mar. 1969	3,179,000	21.637	1,383	3,769,000	1,243
June 1969	3,224,000	21.586	1,489	3,539,000	1,186
Sept. 1969	3,418,000	23.133	1,544	3,563,000	1,183
Dec. 1969	3,645,000	24.605	1,584	3,742,000	1,191
Mar. 1970	5,075,000	70.794	1,624	4,069,000	1,213
June 1970	6,457,000	91.633	1,747	3,977,000	1,244
Sept. 1970	8,103,000	116.809	1,915	3,480,000	1,156
Dec. 1970	9,727,000	129.844	1,987	3,732,000	1,135
Mar. 1971	10,631,000	143.406	2,007	3,974,000	1,132
June 1971	10,518,000	140.907	2,027	3,642,000	1,106
Sept. 1971	10,610,000	141.435	2,031	3,487,000	1,094
Dec. 1971	11,184,000	149.956	2,005	3,554,000	1,096
Mar. 1972	11,428,000	154.298	2,044	3,567,000	1,061
June 1972	11,672,000	157.576	**	3,021,000	**

*Fiscal Year

**In June, 1972, of the 3,129 counties and independent cities in the United States, 2,132 had a food stamp program, 923 had a commodity distribution program, 64 had both (nearly always in distinct political subdivisions of a county), and 10 had no program at all.

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM STATISTICS

(Number of children receiving meal on a daily basis in peak month)

	School Lunch — All Lunches	School Lunch — Free and Reduced Price Lunches	School Breakfasts	Day-Care Recreation Program Meals
1961 (FY)	13,527,000	1,266,000	—	—
1962 (FY)	14,265,000	1,333,000	—	—
1963 (FY)	15,035,000	1,365,000	—	—
1964 (FY)	16,087,000	1,480,000	—	—
1965 (FY)	17,025,000	1,587,000	—	—
1966 (FY)	17,852,000	1,866,000	—	—
1967 (FY)	18,323,000	2,150,000	50,000	—
1968 (FY)	18,615,000	2,325,000	167,500	—
1969 (FY)	18,700,000	2,800,000	221,000	138,400
1970 (FY)	21,900,000	4,600,000	442,000	321,500
1971 (FY)	23,700,000	6,200,000	756,000	595,000
1972 (FY) (estimated)	25,400,000	8,400,000	1,178,000	126,000 day care 1,011,000 summer
1973 (FY) (estimated)	27,500,000	8,400,000	1,562,000	154,000 day care 1,379,000 summer

WHERE WE STAND NOW

Program	The Universe of Need	Latest 1972 Participation Data	Target Population Fiscal 1973	Present Hunger Gap	Per cent Being Served
Food Stamps	26 million (poor or $4,110 per yr. for a family of four) to 30 million (under $4,476 per yr.)	11.8 million	12.5 million	11.2 million to 15.2 million	49% to 58%
Commodity Distribution		3.0 million	3.5 million		
Nutritional Supplements	2.2 million (poor pregnant women and infants under one)	164,000	175,000	2 million	8%
Food Certificates		12,400	12,500		
Free or Reduced Price Lunches	10 million	8.4 million	8.4 million	1.6 million	84%
School Breakfast	3.5 million to 6 million	1.18 million	1.6 million	2.3 million to 4.8 million	20% to 34%
Nonschool Food Service					
a) Day care year round	750,000	154,000	300,000	596,000	24%
b) Summer recreation	3 to 5 million	1.38 million	1.5 million	2 million	27% to 46%

Aside from the immense gap between those reached and the still-existing need, what of the nutritional adequacy of the programs themselves?

The two basic family feeding programs are food stamps and commodity distribution. The current food stamp program provides the poor with spending power enough to purchase at the level of the Department of Agriculture's Economy Food Plan. The dollar equivalent of this plan is $112.00 a month for a family of four.*

In fact, this amounts to an average per person federal subsidy or bonus (the difference between the face value of the stamps and what the recipient pays for them) of $13.45 a month or 14.7 cents a meal. From January, 1970, (when the food plan was at $106.00) to July, 1972, (when it went to $112.00), the consumer price index for food consumed at home went up at a rate 300 per cent greater than the rise in the allotment. The Department of Agriculture, however, in 1968 had described the Economy Food Plan "as not a reasonable measure of basic money needs for a good diet." In its last nationwide Food Consumption Survey in 1965-66, the Department, in fact, found that fewer than ten per cent of the families studied who spent at the Economy Food Plan level were able to buy their recommended dietary allowance for seven essential nutrients, while over 50 per cent of the same families had poor diets because they did not obtain even two-thirds of those recommended allowances. The plan neglects significant regional differences in food costs and assumes that all families are composed of smaller children, rather than allowing also for the needs of more hearty-eating teenagers.

The diet of the three million people who are enrolled in the commodity distribution program would not be entirely adequate even if all received their full allotment of slightly over 37 pounds of canned and boxed goods each month. They would obtain at least 100 per cent of the Recommended Daily Allowance of protein and six minerals and vitamins, but only 80 per cent of needed calories. In fact, however, the program distributes an average of only 28.2 pounds of food per person each month, or 74 per cent of the promised items by weight and 73 per cent of the items according to projected retail value ($9.50 a month value as opposed to the theoretical $16.00 a month).

The picture that emerges from our review of the evidence of the past four years is this: an undertaking requiring an extremely sensitive and compassionate understanding of people and their needs not only for food but for a sense of worth and self-esteem, is being performed by an impersonal bureauracy, governed not by the needs of the people it is supposed to serve, but by the needs of bureaucracy itself.

Such, of course, in oversimplified form, is the way most government operations do function. Ultimately the task set before them gets done, in some fashion, in some calendar year, if not now, then later. In the matter of hunger, however, there are not another five, ten, twenty years to wait. Lives today are being irreparably damaged by decisions already made affecting food programs. Decisions are being made today that will affect the lives of thousands more. In this report we have attempted to set forth in detail the reasons—in program concept, planning, and administration—for the nation's failure to reach the remaining number of the poor untouched by any federal food program and the reasons for the sense of disillusion and despair evident among so many who have been reached.

Summary

In summary, it can be said that while 57 per cent of the nation's poor are reached by one of the two standard family feeding programs, 45 per cent of the total poor receive enough only to purchase a diet at the bare survival level; and that 12 per cent receive less than three-fourths of the recommended dietary allowances. For 43 per cent of the nation's poor there is no federal help at all.

*There is litigation pending in a federal court, questioning the nutritional adequacy of this.

II.
Political Considerations and Bureaucratic Sensitivity

But there has been progress since 1968 and it has coincided almost exactly with the Nixon administration. How did it come about?

Early in 1969, President Nixon was quoted as saying regarding food programs, "You can say that this administration will have the first complete, far-reaching attack on the problems of hunger in history. Use all the rhetoric, so long as it doesn't cost any money."*

Without reviewing old history of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, it can be said that Mr. Nixon's position was also their's: rhetoric, but not resolve. How, then, has the progress since 1969 been made?

Largely, we think, through Congressional initiative and the insistence of private organizations. We would add that a Democratic-controlled Congress has moved more readily and decisively since 1968 than it was willing to do when Democrats also controlled the White House, the Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of the Budget; or than it likely would have had that been the case these past few years. The hungry — those kept hungry and vulnerable by our employment and welfare policies — have probably benefitted from a government divided between Republicans and Democrats.

The Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs (the McGovern Committee) was created by a resolution introduced on the day *Hunger USA* was released. Since early 1969, it has conscientiously studied and monitored and sought to improve federal food programs.

On May 6, 1969, President Nixon called for "an end to hunger in America itself for all time", and made certain beginning proposals. On Christmas Eve, 1969, he committed his administration to feed all needy school children in America at whatever necessary cost. But it took Senatorial action in February, 1970, to force him to accept a school lunch bill that mandated fulfillment of that promise. Nor did the May, 1969, pledge deter Secretary Hardin's successful effort to defeat a more liberal food stamp bill in the House in December, 1970.

Events of 1971 raised even more doubts regarding the May, 1969, pledge.

April, 1971—The Administration sliced one-third of a million welfare recipients from food stamps rolls. They were restored in July under pressure.

May, 1971—The White House put into action a year old decision to phase out distribution of foodstuffs to pregnant and nursing mothers and infants. (The program was restored in December, reportedly as part of the administration's strategy to gain enough votes to confirm the appointment of Earl Butz as the new Secretary of Agriculture.)

June, 1971—The Administration refused to release funds to permit one million inner city children to have food at summer recreation projects. The funds were released in July after public pressure.

July, 1971—The Administration substantially reduced food stamp benefits (and in some instances eliminated eligibility) for the "upper-income poor." The benefits were restored in January, 1972, again under pressure.

August, 1971—The Administration curtailed free and reduced price lunch funds available to the states. The funds were restored in November under pressure.

September, 1971—The Administration refused to spend funds on revamping the commodity distribution program.

October, 1971—The Administration cut 1.5 million school lunch recipients from rolls. They were restored in November under pressure.

November, 1971—The Administration ordered reduction in reimbursements for breakfasts in schools and meals in day care centers.

December, 1971—The Administration refused to permit commodity distribution alongside of food stamp distribution in Seattle, Washington. This was permitted only after a court order, and an offer of food to Seattle residents from the city of Kobe, Japan.

The Congress

The politics of the hunger issue can be seen in Congress as well as in the statements and actions of presidents. The original Food Stamp Act was successfully enacted in 1964 in large part because Congresswoman Leonor Sullivan of St. Louis, Missouri, was astute enough to sense that the bill which she sponsored on behalf of the hungry could be used in trade by the urban House members in exchange for farm legislation desired by the farm bloc. She took skillful advantage of her bargaining position to exchange a wheat-cotton subsidy program for food stamps. In 1967

*Nick Kotz; Let them Eat Promises; *Prentice-Hall, Inc; 1969. Page 210.*

and in 1968 she repeated her strategy of linking urban support for farm programs with rural and farm support for food programs and was thus able to extend and expand the Act and its authorization level.

By 1970, the farm subsidy had become so suspect in the Congress that no alliance could be forged. Efforts by the National Farmer's Organization, labor unions, and the Cotton Council to explore a mutual deal between production payment and stamp supporters proved abortive. Food stamps were thus no longer a political asset to the House Agriculture Committee. Accordingly, in an unusual about face, on February 20, 1971, Committee Chairman R. W. Poage (D-Tex.) and ranking Republican committeeman Page Belcher of Oklahoma, wrote House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Wilbur Mills (D-Ark.) that they were willing "if your Committee feels that it must recommend a Family Assistance Program, including the payment of cash to needy families, that you should also take over the shaping of the Food Stamp Program that there might be no conflict or overlapping."

Politics has also been a major factor in the Senate's handling of food programs, although the results have as often, recently, proven benign as malignant. Senator McGovern's presidential ambitions have by no means been hampered among liberal constituents by his position as a leading hunger fighter in the Congress. Georgia Senator Herman Talmadge, Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and Senator Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.) have gained strength among their new black constituents by their support of food stamp and school lunch legislation.

No Advice, No Consent

In 1968, we recommended that to enhance the dignity of the distribution of commodities and food stamps, public hearings be held at times and places convenient to probable beneficiaries so that they might comment upon state and local government plans for running these programs.

In 1969, the Task Force Action Statement of the White House Conference on Hunger called upon the President to permit the poor to run their own food programs because "the provision of food services has too often been thwarted by lack of responsiveness at the State and local government levels." The Conference stated its belief that "maximum dignified participation by recipients is insured by transferring organizational and operational responsibilities to duly constituted, broad-based, local community organizations or the recipients themselves."

In 1971, the Report of the Follow-Up Conference to the White House Conference stressed that poor use had been made of voluntary organizations in the fight against hunger. The report emphasized the fact that "often the tremendous talent, energy and even money of volunteers is spent fighting various levels of Government rather than in extending and multiplying the outreach and service of local bodies." The report further stated that "the use of citizens' advisory committees at various levels of Government, as regards both poverty and consumer programs, still needs to be developed." The report complained, also, that the Conference advocacy of major involvement of the poor in food programs had been inadequately treated by the responding Federal agencies.

As a purely private body (formed, in part, because the federal government, when asked in the person of its Surgeon-General what it knew about the extent of malnutrition in this country, replied "we do not know . . . It hasn't been anybody's job") we are particularly disturbed that the poor have not been involved more in their own service.

This exclusion of the poor from even the most modest advisory role, coupled with invariable negative reaction by the government bureaucracy to any adverse commentary, has led to the increasing alienation of the poor and firm entrenching of official insensitivity. Unfortunately, the poor have been treated as bystanders throughout the past four years of food program administration.

There was no participation of any sort by any outsider in the programs' direction until, in late 1968, the USDA, for the first time, convened a Food and Nutrition Programs Advisory Group of the Consumer and Marketing Services. Its function, ostensibly, was to review in advance policy decisions affecting the direction of food assistance programs. Unfortunately, the group held its last meeting in May, 1969, (at which time it listened to staff statistical reports), and has been defunct ever since, despite promises to resurrect it.

The Department of Agriculture has consistently rejected offers to permit participation of poor people's representatives in drafting sessions on proposed school lunch or food stamp regulations. Public outcry forced it to print its school lunch regulations in proposed form with comments invited, rather than issuing them in final form by traditional fiat. The Department cancelled a program on food aid scheduled for its February, 1971, Outlook Conference for its Extension personnel from around the country because several poverty groups demanded to be heard. It limited to 30 days the opportunity for poor persons to comment on proposals which would drastically revise the food stamp program, but gave the poultry industry 60 days to analyze regulations on chicken inspection.

Response to the White House Conference

The Department's response to the recommendations of the White House Conference on Hunger is equally instructive. In rejecting the request that operating responsibility be transferred to local community organizations to assure maximum dignified participation by recipients, it simply begged the question. "Food programs," it replied, "are best operated through Federal, State/local governmental structure that is responsive to the needs of the recipients."

The Department's response was more feeble, still, to the oft-repeated suggestion that community-based groups be involved in outreach work to bring programs to potential recipients. The Emergency Food and Medical Services (EFMS) program of OEO, the Department said, is engaged in outreach. (Yet the EFMS program is being phased out because the Department supposedly is performing identical duties.) As evidence of outreach, the Department does point to the existence of two handbooks for volunteers and mention the work of its indigenous nutrition aides in advising families of proper foods and how to cook them.

When in 1971 the Administration scheduled the Follow-

Up Conference to the White House Conference at isolated, expensive Williamsburg, Virginia, in order to prevent a recurrence of the unexpected takeover of the 1969 Conference by poor people who made impassioned presentations of their interests and demands, it did not even invite representatives of the poor: only governmental officials, business leaders, doctors, nutritionists, and a few church people. The effort did not entirely succeed. Members of the Virginia Welfare Rights Organization entered uninvited and remained to voice their dismay that "poor people are not involved in the planning of programs that are supposed to help them."

In light of this foreclosure of the administrative decision-making process to the poor, it is not surprising that they have increasingly turned to the courts as the repository of their complaints. Since 1968, over 100 lawsuits have been filed by legal services lawyers attacking the programs. It is no wonder that the Department's Office of General Counsel constantly requests increases in its budget for additional attorneys to defend program challenges (16 man-years in 1972), while the attorneys' fees of school boards and county welfare offices are also on the rise. The burden this has placed on the courts, which were not designed to review the adequacy of federal food programs, could be partially relieved were the Department and its state and local counterparts to evidence willingness to admit the poor into some form of program partnership and, thereafter, effectively enforce program guidelines.

Summary

1. Congressional initiative and the insistence of private organizations have been responsible for much of the progress that has come in food programs for the past four years.

2. The participation of poor people in the planning of food programs has been overtly and covertly discouraged by USDA.

III.
The Discipline of the Budget

They give us this story at the welfare office that they don't have any money in this budget, or that they don't have any money to pay people to work to help out with the long lines that are there every month. So, instead of more surveys, please, if there is any way possible, put some more money in the budget . . . Mrs. Delphina Robinson of St. Francis County, Arkansas, testifying before the Citizens Board of Inquiry, February 15, 1971.

There is more than poignancy in the testimony of Mrs. Robinson, more than the hurt of a single individual. In a few agonized words she has summed up the frustrations of thousands who have become enrolled in food programs and of many more who have not. She has also defined—in a very personal way—a major reason why the nation's food programs have reached only half of the poor and hungry: budgetary constraints.

Monetary considerations, of course, affect all government programs and it is probably true that no agency ever has as much money as could be effectively put to use. All federal agencies, in fact, are notorious for their bureaucratic self-protectiveness, their tendency to view their appropriations as money belonging to them alone, and, therefore, money to be preserved, not spent. Disbursements are always carefully monitored, priorities assigned, savings readily approved. We have no quarrel with honest accounting. Our quarrel, rather, is with the budgetary priority that apparently has been assigned to ending the problem of hunger. Are dollars more important than people? In the administration of federal food programs the answer too often has seemed to be "yes" despite increased expenditures for the food programs that have come over the past four years. For the sad truth is that every advance made has come only after the most bitter and exhausting kind of bureaucratic in-fighting and ultimately Congressional pressure.

Unfortunately, presidents have frequently set parsimonious examples after making the most liberal kind of public pronouncements. President Nixon's statement regarding the use of rhetoric is an almost classic illustration. His predecessors were little different. President Kennedy inveighed against those who cut school lunch funds and had his Secretary of Agriculture declare to Congress that we had the means to abolish hunger, leaving unanswered the question of "whether we possess the humanity to do so." Then, yielding to budgetary restraints, he proceeded to return unspent to the Treasury, over three years, a total of $260.7 million in customs receipts specifically set aside in the budget for feeding poor children and adults. President Johnson declared war on poverty and then withheld during his administration $619 million appropriated for food programs in order to meet self-imposed budgetary restrictions.

FOOD STAMPS

The Department of Agriculture—in conjunction with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)—has passively accepted the budgetary discipline on food programs, rarely exhibited strong initiative to make innovative use of its funds to feed hungry people. In 1969, the Department of Agriculture refused to use $36 million in food stamp appropriations that would have fed 5.2 million persons for one month under the program then in effect. Its refusal was based on the fear that to spend all of the money available for fiscal year 1969 by adding new counties or changing total allotment might bind it to spend too much in fiscal year 1970.

Similar sums were permitted to go unspent in 1970. In December, 1970, when the opportunity came to change the food stamp law to allow unused monies to be carried over to the next year, rather than to be lost, the Department offered no opposition to Congressional conference committee action wiping out such a provision, even though it had been passed *by both houses* of Congress and was thus entitled to become law.

As a result, only this June the Department returned another $418 million to the Treasury, thus denying the poor ten per cent of food stamp monies, monies that could have yielded another $40 per person in food purchasing power over the course of the year.

Controlling Participation

The principle that preserving money always takes precedence over reaching every eligible person is the clearest thread running through the administration of the food stamp program since 1964. Adequate money is the precondition of any universal food stamp program. The level of funding and the size of the program are inextricably interlinked, since the willingness to buy the stamps depends upon the level of the bonus offered. The higher the bonus (the difference between total allotment value and purchase price) the more likely an individual is to participate in the program. Thus, in order to keep participation levels under some control and thereby place adequate restraints on costs, the Department has had the choice of holding bonuses down by setting *high* purchase prices or *low* total allotment values.

Since the program's inception, the Department has adopted both courses of action, as well as delayed the acceptance of applicant counties into the program. During the first five program years through 1969, the cost to the user ran from approximately 30 per cent of his disposable income to a high of 46 per cent. Even the poorest of poor — those with no income at all or incomes of less than $30.00 per month—had to pay something. That amount was $8.00 for a family of four until the fall of 1968 when it became $2.00. It was reduced "experimentally" to nothing in two South Carolina counties in March, 1969, (no more than 900 persons were served at this level in any one month and the experiment has cost less than $15,000) and finally to nothing nationwide, effective February 1, 1972. From all reports, on the latter action, restrictive local interpretations and requirements that applicants prove they have no income apparently have worked to keep many recipients from being placed in the free stamp category.

Households beyond the $30.00-a-month level can still be compelled to pay up to a statutory ceiling of 30 per cent of their disposable monthly income in order to receive stamps. The purchase tables now in effect require an investment of approximately 27 per cent of disposable income for the bulk of the poor, which is over two times as much as the 12.8 per cent of income the average American spends on food at home. It is little wonder that a study for the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition conducted in 1969 concluded that the cost to the user was responsible for excluding at least 56 per cent of the eligible poor who did not buy food stamps in food stamp counties. The purchase price requirement closed the door on the poorest of the poor because the lump sum cash payment was too high for them to meet at any one time in the course of the month. It restrained those whose income was between $30.00 to $200.00 a month from participating because of the high percentage of income they had to put into food stamp purchases to the sacrifice of other necessities. It discouraged the participation of those making $200.00 a month and up because the return involved in the bonus-cash purchase ratio was not attractive enough.

The coupon allotment value has similarly functioned to dissuade many food stamp customers. From 1964 through 1969 the total coupon value ranged in the North from $60.00 for a family of four with monthly income of less than $20.00 up to $112.00 for a family earning $330.00 to $360.00. In the South the range was from $58.00 coupon value for a family under $30.00 up to $80.00 for a family in the $190.00 to $210.00 bracket. This irrational distribution, with more coupons going to the less poor, was challenged in court and finally abandoned in December, 1969, with the institution of new coupon issuance tables that set total allotments at the level of the Economy Food Plan, without regional variation. (The Economy Food Plan at the time set $106.00 a month for a family of four or slightly over 29 cents per person per meal. The amount now is $112.00 per month or slightly over 30 cents per person.)

The selection of the Economy Food Plan could only have been made from the desire to limit spending, for earlier in 1968 the Department of Agriculture had thought it inadequate for nutritional purposes.

> Studies show [the Department had commented] that few families spending at the level of the Economy Plan select foods that provide nutritionally adequate diets. The cost of this plan is not a reasonable measure of basic money needs for a good diet. The public assistance agency that recognizes the limitations of its clientele and is interested in their nutritional well-being will recommend a money allowance for food considerably higher than the cost level of the Economy Plan. Many welfare agencies base their food cost standards on the USDA Low-Cost Food Plan which costs about 25 per cent more than the Economy Plan.

A year later the Department changed its mind and described the plan as providing "a fully nutritional diet." By 1970 the Department was prepared to assert not only that the plan "provides sufficient purchasing power for an adequate diet," but that "food plans providing an adequate diet could be developed at still lower cost."

In the midst of the December, 1970, congressional debate on the food stamp bill, a letter from Assistant Secretary Richard Lyng was interjected claiming that the "Economy Plan does provide families with nutritionally adequate diets . . . It is obvious, of course, that the more expensive food plans published by the Department offer families a broader range of choice and allow them to utilize foods with lower value per dollar."

Congressional Crises

In August, 1969, President Nixon proposed elimination of the food stamp program altogether as part of his welfare reform package without, however, providing for any offsetting increase in cash benefits. The attempt, which, again, could only have been made to save money to the detriment of actual stamp recipients, was abandoned in the face of public disclosure and criticism. In the fall of the same year, the Administration actively lobbied against the food stamp bill sponsored by Senators McGovern and Javits (R-N.Y.) because of its high allotment ($134.00 a month, the dollar equivalent of USDA's Low-Cost Food Plan as distinguished from the Economy Food Plan) and lowered purchase price (no more than 25 per cent of income would have been required to purchase stamps and free stamps would have gone to families of four with less than $67.00 monthly). The President threatened to veto food stamp legislation that exceeded his budgeted figures.

The most cruel triumph for budgetary discipline came in connection with the food stamp debate in the House on December 16, 1970, when a "work requirement" provision was passed as part of the House Agriculture food stamp bill. This provision compelled every able-bodied adult food stamp recipient to accept jobs paying at least $1.30-an-hour under penalty of having his family lose its entire food stamp allotment. It was passed during the Christmas season when many pre-holiday parties were in progress and a number of supporters of a bi-partisan substitute bill were absent. A substitute bill (called the Foley-Quie Bill after its principal sponsors, Rep. Thomas Foley [D-Wash.] and Albert Quie [R-Minn.]) would have set the allotment at 35 cents per person per meal or $128.00 monthly for a family of four. It contained no work requirement clause. But because USDA regarded the cost of the substitute bill as "entirely too high"—as Secretary Hardin

wrote every congressman—it felt compelled to support the Committee bill.

USDA, in April, 1971, issued proposed regulations for implementing the 1970 act that clearly reflected budgetary considerations. Uniform nationwide income eligibility standards were set at slightly above the poverty level, but without regard for the welfare payment levels in many states. As a result, in states with high assistance standards for aged, blind or disabled individuals and couples (over $160.00 per month for one person and $210.00 for two), elderly persons on welfare who were previously automatically eligible to receive food stamps were to be denied such benefits. The thrust of this change, coupled with resource-asset tests that were more stringent than under some welfare systems, would have been to eliminate as many as 350,000 participants from food stamp rolls.

There was an outcry from Congress and the public. The final regulations, issued in July, 1971, automatically included every welfare recipient as a food stamp eligible. The annual cost of re-including the one-third of a million persons who receive the smallest possible monthly bonus ($10.00) was not in excess of $42 million.

By yielding the $42 million, the Department sought to mollify critics of two other cost-reducing changes that were to go into effect shortly after January 1, 1972. The changes on their face appeared to flout the Congressional intent in passing the 1971 food stamp act revision, acting as they did to constrict, rather than expand, the number of food stamp users. The same uniform standards that would massively increase eligibility in the South would also cut off from food stamps in twelve states another 75,000 elderly poor persons not on welfare and whose incomes were at the top of the scale. In addition, the Department had promulgated new food stamp purchase schedules that drastically raised the cost of stamps to the "richest of the poor" without concommitantly increasing the value of their stamp allotments.

The practical result of these regulations was to reduce the benefits of 1,750,000 persons. The Department offered no estimate of how many of these would voluntarily quit the program rather than expend considerable effort for little return. For example, welfare recipients and other persons in New York and elsewhere whose income for a family of four was in the vicinity of $360.00 a month would have to pay $99.00 for $108.00 in stamps instead of $82.00 for $106.00 as before. This precipitous 62.5 per cent drop in bonus value from $24.00 to $9.00 was designed, according to Assistant Secretary Lyng "to feather out the benefits as income approaches the eligibility standards" in order to lessen alleged disincentives to earn additional income. The justification was that a person with a job earning $4,300 would decline a $4,500 job if the latter job would cost him $288.00 in food stamps annually, but not if the loss were limited to $108.00. How much less well he would eat if he stayed at $4,300 because no other job was available (the most likely circumstance) was not considered significant.

The response to the approaching reduction of benefits to nearly two million participants peaked on the eve of the implementation of the new purchase schedules. Elderly participants in the White House Conference lobbied their congressmen. Sen. Hubert Humphrey (D-Minn.) introduced a resolution to preserve the previous eligibility standards and purchase schedules for those who would otherwise be hurt by the new ones. The resolution was tacked on as an amendment to the Children's Dental Health Act of 1971 and sent to the House. Twenty-eight senators petitioned Secretary Butz to make the necessary regulatory changes without the necessity for Congressional action. Fourteen Northeastern state government officials, including many Republican governors, appealed for a moratorium on the cuts. Senator George Aiken (R-Vt.), ranking minority member of the Senate Agriculture Committee and a supporter of food stamps in the 1950's, tried to persuade the White House to undo the damage. Finally, it was revealed that the Office of Management and Budget had impounded $202 million in food stamp monies that represented the increase in appropriations over the Department's budget request.

The Department, accordingly, retreated, and ordered modifications in the regulations to ensure that no previously eligible participants would lose any benefits when the new purchase schedules went into effect. This meant formally loosening all controls over the withheld $202 million, although the program's rate of spending (approximately $150 million a month) would still leave it with $418 million plus to spare by June 30. The final resolution of the struggle was a welcome move to anti-hunger advocates; yet all their efforts actually went not to expand the program, but merely to hold the line against the forces of budgetary restraint. But, in the end, $418 million in food stamp funds was denied to recipients in the name of preserving the budget.

SCHOOL LUNCH

Other food programs have been damaged or amputated by the swing of the budgetary scythe. Major school lunch amendments were passed in May, 1970, after three months of bargaining to overcome Department of Agriculture reluctance to accept responsibility for seeing that states and school districts furnished a free or reduced price lunch to every needy child (the poor and in some states and localities, the near-poor as well). The amendments called for positive state action to extend free lunches to all schools.

Accentuating the Negative

The failure of those amendments to achieve their intended goal two years later is directly attributable to the Department's method of handling their execution. The Department delayed the announcement of regulations governing the new amendments for over 100 days, until the eve of the school year on September 4, 1970. Then, instead of a clear, unambiguous statement, positively notifying state and local officials about the extent and timing of their obligations under the new law, the Department stressed the negative—what they did *not* have to do. Instead of specifying simple procedures for determining eligibility, the Department added complexity upon complexity, bewildering school personnel and parents alike.

On October 13, 1970, for instance, Herbert Rorex, head of the Department's child nutrition programs, wired his regional directors to reassure those responsible for state

and local action that "there are no requirements to force any school into the school lunch program or to force feed any child no matter how needy." This was purely gratuitous and unworthy of an official in Mr. Rorex's position. But the message was clear: go slow.

Similarly, the Department consistently refused to acknowledge, let alone inform others, that the new law was in effect and mandatory at the start of the 1970-71 school year in September, 1970, rather than January 1, 1971, when national minimum eligibility guidelines became binding. The result: many school districts toyed with their obligations during the fall and did not seriously begin to contemplate adhering to the law until four months had passed. As a consequence, at least half a school year of feeding poor children was lost in many places. The budgeted funds languished unused.

The Department's excessive cost consciousness has been evident in other decisions affecting school lunches. The Department has required states to make their application forms much more detailed as to parents' income. Some 13 income category boxes must be completed. States cannot deliver lunches free or at a reduced price solely on the basis of family size and income level without reference to a complex three-tiered scale that has proved impossible for many school principals, let alone parents, to interpret. Nor was the Department willing to let West Virginia and Pittsburgh proceed with their plans to feed everyone in their schools at least a reduced price lunch, a plan which in West Virginia, at least, had led to a doubling of participation to 80 per cent of all pupils. The Department simply refused to pay the bills unless some selectivity was adopted, forcing the poor and the near-poor to declare themselves neglected.

One of the most harmful actions by the Department in administering the new school lunch law was the promulgation of a regulation regarding reimbursement rates for free or reduced price lunches.* This regulation prohibited any state from re-imbursing a school district at a rate of more than 30 cents per meal served in certain needy schools unless the district first gave a re-imbursement rate of 12 cents in "across the board" general cash assistance to *all* meals served in those schools. The Department was certainly aware that "across the board" funds to which its regulation referred were limited to a nationwide average at the time of slightly more than four cents. Thus its 30 cent re-imbursement limit was a virtual insurmountable barrier to meaningful aid in hard-pressed schools since the majority of special cash monies would be untouchable while school boards refused to extend service because of limited re-imbursement.

By the time the Department became willing to remove this barrier, $47 million of the $356.4 slated for the fiscal year was lost. In March the Department agreed, effective in February, to permit states to transfer special assistance funds to the general assistance pigeonhole in order to satisfy the 12 cent tests. In other words, the Department sought to remedy the impact of its original restriction (a matter of regulatory policy invented by the Department rather than statutory policy mandated by the Congress) by encouraging the diversion of money from a source (the special assistance fund) specifically intended to help feed the poor. The effect of this transfer was to increase support for lunches for *all* children in a given school, including those from the middle-class.

In sum, the Department, by emphasizing the negative rather than exhorting positive compliance; by underwriting procrastination; by refusing all requests to simplify and reduce paperwork; by denying all overtures to universalize free or reduced price lunch service in endemically poverty-stricken areas; and by withholding funds until an impossible condition could be met, had brought budgetary savings at the expense of needy children.

Former presidential advisor Dr. Jean Mayer on Christmas Eve, 1969, had promised that the Administration would spend "what it will cost" to do the job of giving every needy child a school lunch. By the spring of 1971, the purse was open only in the midst of crisis, shifting monies from states with surpluses to states whose lunch programs were in the hole. None of the states or school districts were particularly willing to engage in rapid program expansion because of the uncertainty that promised federal funds would be forthcoming. The federal government by waiting until the last minute to commit itself, ensured that state and local bodies would do likewise.

Regulating Reimbursement

In August, 1971, a few days before school opened, the Department, trying to correct the funding imbalance induced by administration of reimbursement rates in the spring, proposed a new set of regulations, limiting reimbursement for free and reduced price lunches from an overall average of 35 cents (30 cents special and five cents general cash assistance) which was much less than most of the states had received the previous spring. Assistant Secretary Lyng, in announcing the regulations, warned that "fiscal discipline is always difficult but it is absolutely essential if we're to live within our budget."

The state school lunch directors reacted as if to a declaration of war. Nearly every state had planned for the fall in reliance on the spring reimbursement structure. Now the Department was scrapping that structure and replacing it with a new one that entailed cutbacks in the majority of states. Although the exact impact of the Department's action was never certain, 37 states claimed that their programs could not be expanded to reach any more needy pupils and some insisted that they would have

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**Financing of the school lunch program is complex, but some knowledge of its intricacies is necessary to understand USDA action. There are two federal categories for cash assistance, deriving their authority from the National School Lunch Act. Section 4 of that act provides for general cash assistance in support of school lunch programs across the board, without regard for the needs of the school or the income status of children enrolled. Section 11 provides for special cash assistance to lunch programs in what are considered "needy schools." The average general cash assistance nationwide is six cents per meal. Special cash assistance nationwide averages 42-43 cents.*

For every federal dollar put into the Section 4 part of the lunch program, the states must provide $3.00 in matching funds. Prior to July 1, 1971, there was no precise definition as to where the state's $3.00 matching money had to come from and, in fact, historically it came from the sale of lunches. Regulations now require that for fiscal 1973 twelve cents of that $3.00 in matching revenue be derived from state sources other than from the sale of lunches.

to shut down many of their lunchrooms. The problem, of course, was that many states that had reached only a few of their poverty enrollment in 1970-71 had much more to spend than 35 cents per lunch because their money was spread over a small number of lunches. With the same, or only slightly larger, amount of money available in 1971-72 to divide among many more lunches, an income-expense gap was inevitable unless (unlikely, if not impossible) state funds filled the breach. If not, the children would suffer.

The situation was familiar. Congress had made the money available. The Office of Management and Budget wanted no part of it. At the end of June, Congress had enacted a special appropriation of $100 million in customs receipt funds to carry out the provisions of the National School Lunch Act relating to the service of free and reduced price meals. While this money was specifically intended to support summer feeding in recreation programs, much of it was still available for the regular school lunch program. But Assistant Secretary Lyng admitted in a Senate hearing that September that the Office of Management and Budget controlled the amount expended and wanted no more going out than the administration had sought in January, 1971, regardless of how conditions had changed since.

With a majority of states adversely affected, the outcome in the Senate was hardly in doubt. On October 1, the Senate passed a resolution calling for an average reimbursement rate of 45 cents per free and reduced price lunch. The Department, seeking to head off House approval of the resolution, countered with an offer to keep the reimbursement rate at 45 cents a lunch, but, in return, to deny states the right to stipulate a less stringent eligibility standard for free and reduced price lunch than the Federally promulgated poverty level. The probable consequence of this offer was a loss of lunch to approximately 1.5 million children in 31 states and the District of Columbia where a higher standard had already been in existence.

Again, there was a round of senatorial protest (59 senators wrote a letter of complaint to the President seeking his intervention), private criticism (Dr. Mayer called the proposed cuts "mean-spirited") and Congressional action (the House Education and Labor Committee voted 31-0 to override the cut-off of children). The President swiftly ordered the regulations rescinded. This time Congress put an end to further activity with a resolution raising reimbursement rates to a minimun (not average) of 46 cents per meal, in the process eliminating the possible incentive to serve reduced, rather than free meals, and accepting all state eligibility standards in existence before October 1, 1971.*

Equipment and School Lunch

One of the most critical factors in restraining the school lunch budget has been the Department of Agriculture's continued slighting of Congressional concern that substantially more funds be used for equipment assistance to enable schools that now have no cafeteria or kitchen facilities to serve lunch. Congress authorized expanding so-called "non-food assistance" for food preparation, transportation, storage and service equipment to reach $38 million in fiscal year 1971 and $33 million in fiscal year 1972. The Department opposed appropriation of more than $15 million each year for equipment purposes. The Department had its way (although the states reallocated their flexible Section 22 funds to apply an extra $22 million toward equipment in 1971) and as a result children in most of the 18,000 schools throughout the country without kitchen equipment remained unable to participate in the lunch program.**

Congress' goal in providing greater equipment funds was to assure that over a four year period most of the schools currently without facilities could, at the average rate of $10,000 per school, afford to operate as satellite units of central kitchens through the purchase of freezers to hold and convection ovens to heat meals packaged elsewhere. According to the National School Food Service Project, fully equipping all such schools could be achieved with a fiscal-year-1972-through-1975 appropriation of $48 million, for the 75 per cent of federal match of state and local monies would bring in $16 million additional state and local dollars invested in ovens and freezers and lesser equipment. Yet even this sum would not help the thousands of schools that already do serve breakfast and/or lunch with the aid of grossly inadequate equipment that hampers them from efficiently reaching every eligible child.

USDA probably was opposing more than just the amount of money authorized by Congress for equipment. For if all schools had such equipment a larger federal expenditure would be required to support their new lunch programs.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST

At the same time states were reacting unfavorably to suggested retrenchment in lunch support, the Department of Agriculture made moves in the direction of retarding the school breakfast program. The Department clamped a budgetary freeze on 25 per cent of the appropriation, issued trial balloon regulations holding average reimbursement rates to 15 cents per breakfast, and proposed preventing the states from shifting other school food service funds to the breakfast program. When Congress legislatively forced the Department to back down from these initiatives, which would, for example, have limited breakfast service in Kentucky to two months out of the entire school year, and then ordered the Department to report to it the need to fund all schools desiring breakfast programs, the Department responded with a survey showing that only 1,170 schools without breakfast wanted to serve it and thus only $3 million in additional funds would be necessary. The Department's study neatly understated the real demand by eliminating from consideration

**In September 1972, Congress raised the across-the-board reimbursement rate for all lunches to eight cents, thereby automatically increasing the free meal rate to a 48 cent minimum. In addition, Congress set uniform income eligibility guidelines at the poverty level for free meals and gave the states the option to serve free meals to children from families whose incomes do not exceed the poverty level plus 25% (approximately $5140 for a family of four) and reduced price meals up to the poverty level plus 50% (approximately $6165 for a family of four).*

***Over 4,600 of the 18,000-plus schools without lunchroom facilities are located in cities with populations of 100,000 or more.*

some 20,550 other schools that would like to have implemented the breakfast program were sufficient funds available to provide them with reasonable reimbursement rates.

To terminate this numbers game, Congress has had to move in 1972 to provide authority for any school requesting the program to begin serving breakfast.

SPECIAL FOOD SERVICE

Budget restraints and political confrontation have also dominated the history of the special food service, or Vanik program (after Rep. Charles Vanik [D-Ohio], its Congressional sponsor when it was enacted in 1968). The program provides meals and snacks to small children in day care centers or school age children in summer recreation camps.

The program began with a trickle of requested funds in fiscal 1969—$5.7 million. No more than $3.2 million of this amount was ever utilized because the Department of Agriculture had no field network capable of communicating with any significant number of the small, unorganized private centers that handle pre-school children and school-age children when the schools are closed. President Nixon recognized this fact when he sliced former President Johnson's fiscal 1970 budget request for the program from $20.5 million to $10 million, only to have Congress approve $15 million. Predictions of 400,000 children being fed by the program in the summer and year-round in fiscal 1970 collapsed to a more realistic 320,000. Some $8.8 million of the appropriations was carried over for use in fiscal 1971 in addition to $12 million in direct appropriations.

For three straight years between 40 and 60 per cent of appropriated monies went unused because the Department refused to undertake a concerted drive to promote the program and spend the sums in hand. The Department, accustomed to dealing with the known quantity of fifty-plus state school lunch directors, did not make the effort necessary to reach out to a myriad of potential recipient institutions. The funds were passed on from one year to the next, with each fiscal year's new funding not appearing large because of infusions from the year before which never left the Treasury.

In keeping with such a parsimonious doling out of food resources, the Department arranged with the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) to limit Department of Agriculture food aid going to the Head Start programs. The two departments also agreed in late 1969 that Head Start Programs which were initiated prior to November, 1969, or which had food funds incorporated in their Head Start budgets and financed by Head Start could not participate in the Vanik program.

This decision flouts the remarkably unambiguous program authorization calling for "grants" to "maintain" "non-profit food service" in child day care centers or other child care for children from areas with poor economic conditions. Its impact has been severe. Head Start now spends 13 per cent of its entire appropriation—or slightly over $50 million—to feed its 378,000 youngsters. The Head Start budget was cut back ten per cent in fiscal 1971 until Congress overruled the President and restored the cut. Its fiscal 1973 allocation is to be $386 million, a maintenance budget insufficient even to counter the impact of inflation which is nowhere more immediately felt than in the cost of food.

Thus, the effort to retard nonschool food service program expenditures succeeded also in restraining expansion of Head Start to reach the total of 1.6 million additional eligible three to five year olds below the poverty level who need its services.

Internal Conflict

In the spring and summer of 1971 some regional officials of the Department of Agriculture came into conflict with their Washington superiors over extending the Vanik program's outreach. The local officials, aware of the program's surplus funds and apparently resolved to put the money to effective use, went all out to sell special food service to major cities. In Chicago one local official notified potential sponsors that "we want to reach more children" and asked whether they knew "of any non-profit summer programs or day care centers which will be in need of financial assistance with food costs? . . . If you know of any, please contact the USDA." Detroit was urged to triple its capacity. Los Angeles was told that if it found the children, USDA would find the money. San Antonio was promised $200,000 a month in food.

But Washington officials were not as enthusiastic about promoting their product. First, the Department, reacting to a report of its Inspector General that some cities had claimed they were using volunteer services as their required local contribution, tried unsuccessfully to ban the use of volunteer labor as part of the state match. Second, the Office of Management and Budget decided to hold the 1971 spending level to 1970 figures.

Thus eleven cities that had been stimulated by USDA regional officials to participate in the Vanik program and had prepared to feed some 500,000 children, were told by program heads that the money was not available. Deputy Assistant Secretary Philip Olson claimed that the 1970 spending level was adequate because every state could operate without cutbacks and that "programs expanded beyond this level would be counter-productive because of administrative problems."

Congress, again, took remedial action. It passed two bills extending the Vanik program's life and in the process furnishing more funds. The Department did not capitulate until forty senators, led by Republicans, wrote the President to complain. The Office of Management and Budget reversed its decision and released an additional $15 million to the Vanik program. The episode, although familiar in many respects to other budgetary conflicts between the Department and Congress, was also unique in that it had been precipitated by local USDA initiative.

The pattern has repeated itself in 1972 (not enough money available; Congressional investigation; Presidential release of funds) only this time no Department officials have promoted greater expenditures by any city. Rather, the Department has leaned over backwards in the other direction, threatening to cut off the program entirely at any sites serving bag lunches to more than two staff adults per 100 children. USDA would rather have 54 cent meals thrown away, if fewer than the anticipated number

of children show up on a given day, than permit hungry adults to eat.

EMERGENCY FOOD AID

Budgetary manipulation has affected other food programs. No sooner had the Emergency Food and Medical Services program (EFMS) begun to make an affirmative impact in previously neglected places such as rural Texas, than it was determined to be surplusage and slated for retirement. The Administration argued that the functions of EFMS—primarily food program outreach that deeply involves recipients in program mechanics and supplies jobs in food programs to the poor—would soon be fulfilled by the Department of Agriculture. But the Department's version of outreach consists of paying for 62.5 per cent of the state cost of hiring middle-class civil servants to become part of state and county welfare systems. Even then the budgetary line for this administrative cost-sharing does not remotely approach the close to $50 million utilized by EFMS in fiscal years 1970 and 1971. The Congress has forced the administration to spend $20 million in 1972, $4.5 million of which, at the insistence of the White House, is going to the American Red Cross to pay the expenses of Project FIND, a program to inform the elderly about the availability of USDA food assistance. This is still a major cutback in the very first program that was an outgrowth of this Board and of Congressional concern over hunger in 1967.*

AID TO PREGNANT AND NURSING WOMEN

In *Hunger, U.S.A.* we expressed our concern over the fact that existing food programs did not take into account the special dietary needs of pregnant women, the aged, infants, and perhaps others. In response to our criticisms and that of others on this vital point, Congress in 1967 enacted a program to distribute supplementary food packages to pregnant, nursing and post-partum mothers (through the first year of the child's life) and to pre-school children. County health departments were encouraged by the Department of Agriculture with some success to distribute the packages. President Nixon endorsed the program in May, 1969.

But, despite this early support from the Department and from the President, budgetary considerations surfaced in April, 1970, when the Department announced that the program could no longer be extended to any food stamp areas and that in commodity areas where the program had already begun, children over one year of age would not be allowed to participate. For those women and children still eligible to participate, the food allotment would be slimmed down by reducing vital sources of Vitamins A and C, calcium, protein, and riboflavin. The effect of these actions was to render the program practically worthless to the people it was designed to help. Participation has been understandably poor. By June, 1970, the program was supposed to reach 460,000. Today it serves 164,000 women and children in 266 project areas or approximately 35 per cent of its original target and fewer than ten per cent of the people it might help.

The program received new life in December, 1971, not, apparently, due to any objective reassessment by the Department of the nutritional needs of poor, pregnant and nursing women and children, but rather due to political considerations. Throughout 1971, and especially during the summer, Detroit, Michigan, repeatedly asked for an expanded supplementary feeding program to fill the gaps left by inadequate food stamp distribution in the inner city. Its requests were turned down, on the grounds of insufficient funds. This decision was reversed on December 3, 1971, following two events. On November 29, 1971, as reported in the *Washington Post*, Michigan Senator Robert Griffin met with Department of Agriculture representatives to discuss his position on the nomination of Earl L. Butz as the new Secretary of Agriculture. The next day a Department deputy assistant flew to Detroit to inspect the supplementary food program. On December 2, Butz was confirmed by seven votes, including Griffin's. Shortly thereafter an additional 12,000 mothers and children were added to the supplementary food package program in Detroit. On December 12, a Department team, responding to a new demand from Detroit that the high-nutrition items removed from the package nearly 21 months before be restored, made another trip to the city. Nine days later, peanut butter and scrambled egg mix went back on the list for the entire nation and the fruit juice distribution rate was boosted.

PILOT FOOD CERTIFICATES

Under this program pregnant and nursing mothers receive certificates enabling them to purchase up to $5.00 of milk monthly for themselves and $10.00 of milk or iron-fortified formula and instant baby cereal for their infants under one year of age. It is now in effect in only five counties in the country (Yakima, Washington; Bibb, Georgia; St. Johnsbury, Vermont; Cook, Illinois; and Brazos, Texas) and reaches approximately 12,000 people. The Department considers the program a controlled experiment to determine whether a mother and child's nutritional status improves if given increased food purchasing power. The cost of running the program is slightly more than $100,000 a month, miniscule in the total food program budget.

The Department, while on the one hand, employing the pilot certificate approach to counteract pressure to expand the supplementary package program for the same target population, has expressed some opposition to extension of the program beyond its current status. Although participants like the program, the Department has said, "the major impact of the pilot program was to replace cash expenditures with certificates, which had the effect of extending family income." In other words, the mothers did not buy any more milk or formula; they merely bought more food for the rest of their families with the money they previously spent on milk. Understanding this reality, however, has not to date made the Department any more sensitive to yet another reality: poor people want to have the ability to meet their own food needs as they see fit.

**The program, proposed by Mississippi Senator John Stennis in July, 1967, following the testimony of six physicians before a Senate Subcommittee on the existence of widespread hunger and malnutrition in Mississippi, was enacted into law in 1967.*

STAMPS AND COMMODITIES TOGETHER

It took political pressure from overseas to settle the last budget-engendered food program dispute of 1971. Congress had specifically authorized a county simultaneously to distribute commodities and food stamps in the same area (but not both to the same family in any given month), when a state was willing to pay commodity delivery costs or in the face of an emergency. The administration and the Department, in fact, had sought this authorization both in 1969 and 1970. But once the law was changed to permit dual program operation, the Department obstinately refused to permit counties to take advantage of it.

Seattle, Washington, residents took the matter to federal district court. The city had over 110,000 persons unemployed, many with assets such as homes that were unsaleable and yet too valuable for them to meet the food stamp resource eligibility tests, many with incomes insufficient to meet food stamp purchase schedule demands, after meeting house, auto, and insurance payments. The court ordered the Department to implement the law and called the Secretary's action in refusing to allow commodity distribution "arbitrary and capricious" in view of Seattle's economic hardship. The Department delayed action while considering an appeal to higher court. The Office of Management and Budget reportedly fretted over the principle's possibly being extended nationwide, resulting in costly double programming.

Then the city of Kobe, Japan, intervened, bringing about a policy change that the intervention of Washington's Republican governor and other state officials had been unable to achieve even when appealing to White House domestic affairs chief John Ehrlichman, a Seattle native. Kobe employed the powerful weapon of humiliation. It shipped one-half ton of rice noodles and canned food to a church-sponsored group to distribute to the poor. The Department reversed itself and gave in. But only in Seattle.

Summary

1. Budgetary discipline, rather than efficient disbursement of available funds, is the clearest thread running through USDA administration of federal food programs.

2. Anti-hunger forces in and out of Congress have had to exert constant pressure to keep present levels of funding from being curtailed.

3. USDA, sometimes through apparent inertia, more often through arbitrary administrative regulations, has delayed and sometimes completely thwarted Congressional appropriation mandates to bring more people into the family food programs and to increase the level of participation in school lunch programs.

4. USDA has controlled participation in the food stamp program by setting high purchase prices, low allotment values and delaying acceptance of applicant counties.

5. USDA has concentrated on limiting reimbursements it pays schools for each meal and upon restricting the income levels of eligibility for free and reduced price lunches as the primary means of restricting school lunch expenditures.

6. The Special Food Service Program, designed to provide meals to children in day centers, has not been effectively utilized. Appropriated monies consistently have been allowed to go unused, and Washington USDA officials have explictly discouraged innovative outreach efforts of regional USDA offices.

7. Major cutbacks in the Emergency Food and Medical Services Program have come at a time when the program seemed to be making affirmative impact.

8. USDA's program to provide special food aid to pregnant, nursing, and post-partum mothers and preschool children, after being severely curtailed in 1970, gained new life in 1971 during successful efforts to confirm Earl L. Butz as the new Secretary of Agriculture.

9. Operation of both food stamp and commodity distribution programs, although now officially authorized by USDA, has been allowed only in Seattle, Washington, following an overseas shipment of food from Kobe, Japan, to Seattle's poor and unemployed.

IV.
Jurisdictional Rights

While nothing has been more deleterious to the war on hunger during the past four years than budgetary constraints on the arsenal of weapons, the campaign has also been severely handicapped by the reluctance of various governmental arms to cross jurisdictional boundaries. In the absence of vigorous Congressional directives to the contrary it is clear from the food programs histories that the principle of non-intervention will continue.

FOOD STAMPS

The Food Stamp Act of 1964 left it up to each state to determine whether it desired to participate in the program. No county or city could help its residents receive food stamps so long as the welfare agency of the state in which it was located refused to accept responsibility for overseeing the program's administration and for filing a state plan of program operations. Even when the state plan was already prepared, even when no state administrative costs were at stake, and even when minimal overseeing by the state was involved, the state still had the right to prohibit a willing county from running a food stamp program.

Local Recalcitrance and Initiative

Throughout 1970 Oklahoma state Welfare Director Lloyd Rader, in fact, successfully blocked a food stamp program in Harmon County, Oklahoma, despite the desire of county commissioners to have food stamps, despite the existence of an outstanding $32,000 OEO grant to the local community action program to cover the costs of certifying eligible families and issuing them stamps, and despite the completion of a satisfactory state plan. Rader simply refused to permit a food stamp program in Oklahoma. Harmon County Commissioners in March, 1971 finally went to the commodity program.

Then in March, 1972, Oklahoma agreed to take food stamps, leaving three states still without a food stamp program: Delaware, New Hampshire, and Nevada.

Although states have the power to bar the food stamp program from their boundaries, they cannot, once they have accepted the program, compel local governments to make use of it. They can coerce, they can persuade by offering to shoulder administrative costs or by relying on state legislation demanding a statewide program funded for the most part by the state itself, but in practice states do not compel unwilling counties to expend their own funds to start the program. For example, although the Florida legislature passed such a statewide law in 1970, the lack of sufficient state appropriations to pay administrative costs meant that only a handful of the state's 64 counties complied until late 1971. At the moment, Boston, Dallas and San Diego are the largest metropolitan areas not covered by the food stamp program because of local option.

By contrast it should be noted that a state welfare director who conscientiously strives to promote food programs in uncooperative counties can be successful, if he is willing to bear criticism and run political risks. For example, when former Georgia Welfare Director William Burson took office in 1967 (appointed by former Governor Lester Maddox) some 69 counties in the state were without any kind of food assistance program whatever. Burson launched a campaign to bring every county in Georgia into either the food stamp or commodity program. His methods included friendly persuasion—but also outspoken public criticism of resisting public officials. As a result he was denounced mightily by other political leaders and his job was often in jeopardy by threats from irate state legislators who resented his "meddling" in affairs of local governments. But Burson would not be intimidated. He succeeded finally in bringing a food program to every Georgia county except one. Reports persisted throughout his term that Governor Lester Maddox was on the verge of firing him, but the enigmatic governor always stopped short of doing so. His public support of Burson was always lukewarm, but despite all efforts of Burson's adversaries to force him from office, Maddox refused to renounce him.

In some parts of the country, particularly the Northeast, a county may have no power whatever to control the towns within its borders. The authority to cooperate with or bar the food stamp program may reside at the ultimate political level of the township. Middlesex County, Massachusetts, may supposedly have a food stamp program in operation, but that does not mean that Cambridge, the locality with the highest poverty population, is covered. Cambridge, by local option, is involved in commodity distribution. Bristol County, Massachusetts, may proclaim that it issues food stamps, but the stamps do not reach the residents of New Bedford, a city with one of the highest rates of unemployment in the United States.

Waiting On USDA

Even if the state, the county and town prove to be willing to institute a food stamp program, the federal government may not be. The Department reviews the state lists of waiting counties and makes its own decision

as to whom to admit. This decision is often based on budget limitations, but also, critics declare, on political favoritism.

In June, 1969, at the same time he was returning $30 million in appropriations to the Treasury for fiscal year 1969, Secretary Hardin refused to expand the rolls by admitting counties that had requested inclusion. In April, 1971, the Secretary refused to admit any of the 100-plus patiently-waiting counties, despite an unlimited authorization, because the Office of Management and Budget would not allow him to spend any more money on the program than was absolutely necessary. Congressman Whitten was finally forced to write a directive into the supplemental appropriations ordering that 135 counties be admitted, but the order came too late to have an impact before fiscal 1972 and was not acceded to until October, 1971.

The USDA has, on its own, barred Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam from the Food Stamp program. Congress is willing, even if not anxious, to have Puerto Rico included, but the Department has exercised its discretion to the contrary, apparently because more than one million Puerto Ricans would be eligible at a potential annual cost of over $200 million. Once again, budgetary concerns impel the Department to maintain the status quo with Puerto Rico eligible only for a reduced bag of commodities and the Puerto Rican poor confronting unusually high food prices (because of transportation to the island) with the lowest incomes in the country (the island's per capita income is less than 70 per cent of Mississippi's) and no increase in their food purchasing power.

COMMODITY DISTRIBUTION

The overlapping, conflicting jurisdictional blocks to any family's participation in the food stamp program are mirrored in the commodity distribution program, where there are absolutely no statutory obstacles to complete federal control as to program installation. The federal government has the power and uses almost none of it. If a state won't agree to help feed the poor, the federal government will not ordinarily intervene. Nor will the federal government normally interpose its authority to coerce county and township governments.

Observing States Rights

The Department in 1967 did make one tentative stab at expanding its own role in the commodity program beyond that of buying the commodities and dropping them off at various rail points in the participating states. (At last count 35 of the 50 states were involved in commodity distribution). In November of that year the Department became uneasy about complaints that hundreds of counties with high rates of poverty, primarily in the South, were purposefully turning their backs on available commodities because of the allegedly high cost of storing and transporting them. By administrative fiat, the Department offered discretionary funds to counties or other political subdivisions that were selected by state commodity agencies (mainly state education departments) as being in need of monetary assistance to meet distribution expense.

There were no regulations specifying the exact method for allocating this financial aid to local governments. As a result, the Department determined to assist those 340 counties in the country that were without any family feeding program and that were also among the 1,000 counties in the country with the lowest per capita income according to the 1960 census. The qualifying areas were aided on a variable basis, up to the total cost of handling the program. Until the spring of 1970 the Department aided some 188 government units in that manner.

In the most recalcitrant locations on the list, where local officials refused to administer the program even with federal operating money, and were also opposed to the federal government doing it for them, the Department did intervene directly. USDA started and ran commodity distribution programs in 46 counties in 1968 and 1969.

Despite such intervention, however, the Department insisted still on upholding the principle that it would not operate a program in any unwilling place. The sanctity of jurisdiction was maintained by insisting upon proof of the acquiescence of the state and county in the Department's activities. In December, 1969, USDA offered an additional $15 million of discretionary monies to the states. The states were to use this money on a priority basis to encourage nonparticipating counties to start a commodity program as well as increase the frequency of distribution and provide better warehouse facilities so that already-participating counties could make the full list of goods available. The states were apportioned the funds on the basis of per capita income and their number of poor inhabitants without access to family food assistance. But the Department took no action to assure that every eligible state would accept its share and pass it on to its counties (six did not). It has since expanded the program slightly by releasing all the funds it had previously contributed to distributing food in those poorest counties without any food assistance.

If the federal government's obeisance to the bureaucratic cult of jurisdiction is bad, the fealty of states and counties to the principle of non-intervention is even more intense. The poor are nobody's responsibility. No governing body will accept responsibility for their welfare and none will have it thrust upon them. Perhaps the classic instance of this attitude was revealed in March, 1969, when the Senate Select Committee went to Collier County, Florida, to examine the plight of migratory farmworkers. Ewell Moore, Collier County Commissioner, informed the Committee when asked who would feed the migrants in the county and why he had not instituted a commodity distribution program:

> If the Federal people are going to do it, O.K. The migrants themselves are Federal people. They are not Immokalee people. They are not Collier people, they are not Florida people. They are Federal people, and if there is free food, these people will come early and stay late. We will have them in town all year long.

NO PROGRAMS AT ALL

As of June, 1972, there were at least ten counties in the United States without any plans for operating a federal family food assistance program. Six have never been in any such program: Jackson and Pitkin in Colorado; Scott in Kansas; Madison in Montana; Sioux in Nebraska; and Beaver in Oklahoma. Four were in at one time, but then withdrew: Gilpin in Colorado; Knox in Missouri;

Blanco and Hunt in Texas. In addition, some 38 towns and cities in New England (20 of them in Massachusetts, 13 in Maine, and five in New Hampshire) refuse to participate even though other localities in their counties are involved in one of the two programs.

The Department, adhering to its hands-off attitude on jurisdictional problems, refuses to acknowledge the situation and proudly announces statistics on the 3,119 counties in which food programs are planned or in effect. Meanwhile, the Department persists in dealing with the programless county question as obliquely as ever, noting in its reports that "in cooperation with State officials, field staffs of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service are continuing to encourage and assist those remaining counties to adopt either a direct food assistance program, or a food stamp program."

The Courts vs. USDA

In April, 1968, we informed the American people that "neither food stamp programs nor commodity programs exist in over one-third of our poorest counties." We strongly recommended that "Federal food programs should be available to the needy of every locality and should not depend on local or state option."

The Poor People's Campaign of that year picked up this theme and demanded that the Department institute food programs in the 256 counties without food programs that were hunger distress areas. At the same time, poor residents of Alabama counties that had no food programs sued the Department for the same relief.

The Department responded by extending food distribution into counties that were willing to accept it if the federal government was responsible for administration. The Department budged no farther. It told the Poor People's Campaign that "administrative problems, in many cases local resistance, precluded expansion of the food program to additional counties, not lack of funds." Not only did it refuse either to overcome or ignore that local resistance, it also defended the Alabama lawsuit by arguing that the poor people had no right to ask the court to examine the Department's inactions.

In November, 1968, twenty-six other lawsuits were filed in twenty-six states against both the states and the Department for not implementing food programs. As it had in the Alabama case (which it finally lost in May, 1970), the Department contended that the plaintiffs could not seek judicial relief. It refused to obey an injunction, granted in California on December 30, 1968, restraining it from "refusing to put into effect in the shortest time feasible one of the two federal food programs . . . in every California county . . ." The state of California tried to comply; the Department did not. The federal judge was reluctant to find the Secretary in civil contempt and jail him. By June, 1969, all of the California counties had fallen into line and the case was dismissed.

Elsewhere, the Department continued to resist the legal actions. On November 21, 1969, the California order was repeated in Texas, affecting 88 counties. The Department stalled compliance for over six months. To undermine the suit, it sought unsuccessfully to have the FBI pressure one of the named plaintiffs, Annie Bell Jay, into declaring that she had perjured herself and retracting her testimony on her family's hunger. Finally, the court let the Department have until June 30, 1970, to comply, and the Department used all of its persuasive arts coupled with Federal administrative funds to coerce Texas into planning programs in every county. By June 30, the Department was able to claim that it had reduced the list of counties without food programs from 480 when it first took office to 32, and 22 more were off the list by August 31, 1970. But a national legal drive had been necessary to prompt the Department to embark upon a campaign of persuasion and abandon its laissez-faire methods. But that persuasion, implicitly accepting the limitations of federal authority, reinforces and does not overcome the jurisdictional hurdles.

Adams County, Pennsylvania

For a time the jurisdictional issue smoldered unnoticed. Then in January of 1971, it erupted again in Adams County, Pennsylvania, where county commissioners refused to believe that hunger existed. If it did, they insisted that laziness had to be the cause. They would not institute a federal food program. The commissioners were importuned time and time again, but stood by their original decision, claiming nothing could change their minds. They told two college students who were pressing for a program that it was "no use sitting here and talking; we have decided to stand on our decision until the end of our term." Senator McGovern sought to intervene, but was told he was not welcome. USDA merely watched from the sidelines, occasionally talking with local officials, but taking no action.

When Senator McGovern finally wrote Secretary Hardin strongly urging him to use his power to intervene, the Department responded by ruling out direct Federal action to feed needy families in all the holdout, uncooperative counties. While noting that it had the authority to open its own food distribution centers in the counties, the Department said it would not do so because of public opposition there and noted that it would continue efforts to get the counties to sign up voluntarily. Adams County finally came on board in September, 1971, when the commissioners gave up and installed food stamps.

SCHOOL LUNCH

Providing school lunch has also been a matter of states' rights (or rather local school board option) not subject to meaningful federal action to assure every needy pupil at least one nutritious meal a day. Until 1970 neither the Congress nor the executive branch assumed any responsibility for requiring, or providing incentives, for school districts to serve lunch in every school within their system (or, in a few instances, for the districts themselves to be involved). The Department did have a project labelled "Operation Metropolitan" that had minimal success in bringing 50 and 60-year-old inner city schools into the program, and Congress furnished some support for food service equipment to be placed in schools built without cafeterias. But universal lunch service for the poor was neither a requirement nor a stated goal.

The Senate attempted to change all that in February, 1970, by commanding that, as part of each state's plan of child nutrition operations (the first one would be filed by June, 1970), each state would describe how it would spend its program monies so as to include every school in

the state including those without kitchen facilities by the deadline of September, 1972. The Department reacted strongly to this mandate and successfully lobbied in the House to remove any reference to a deadline and to delay submission of the first state plan for a minimum of seven months. The Department also succeeded in diluting the mandate of the legislation, changing the very specific requirement that the lunch program plan "shall include" every school to the more general requirement that the states "extend" their lunch program to all schools. Local freedom to reject federally-financed food for the poor was vigorously defended.

The Department has failed to criticize states whose plans offer no showing of any design, however prolonged, to extend the program to all schools. Instead, it takes pride in the fact that equipment assistance has meant that since April , 1970, approximately 6,600 schools have come on the rolls to participate in the school lunch program. At that rate, however, with 107,000 schools in all and spring, 1972, participation by only 89,400, another five to six years could elapse before food service is complete in inner city and rural schools attended by impoverished students.

The Department's analysis of the situation is poignant. When a Department administrator was confronted with the permissive attitude toward participation by schools and the question as to whether this meant that making lunch service nationwide was going to be like fulfilling the desegregation decision "with all deliberate speed and taking 15 years to get results," his response was that he hoped it would not take "quite that long." Congressional inquiries into local foot-dragging on the matter are met with the standard and superficially reasonable answer—"Basically, the Department is trying to reach these schools by working with State and local officials to develop food service systems that meet the special needs of the schools." And as if to evidence its sincerity (as ultimate goal, if not the timing of its attainment) in November, 1971, it awarded a contract to Washington State University to conduct a two-year study on why some schools do not participate in the school feeding programs.

Two years from now, with hundreds of thousands of poor children still not receiving lunch, the Department will receive answers it already has in hand. In fact, its own actions should figure prominently in arriving at those answers. It could also profit from the testimony of Burlington, Vermont, school officials before Senator McGovern as to why they refuse to feed children:

—"We pay our educators to teach and not feed children."

—"Most children can get an adequate breakfast and lunch at home."

—"Children need fresh air and exercise as well as food" including the walk home for lunch with their mothers and the walk back.

Such indifference we heard over and over in our visits around the country four and five years ago. But the Department wants to wait two more years for a study and then, if past experience is a guide, it will not seek to coerce school boards into obeying the intent of Congress. The best available evidence indicates rather, that the Department will, long before then, abandon attempts to bring about nationwide application. In fact, the language in the 1970 Act asking states to report their plans for extending lunch to all schools has been jettisoned in the school lunch sections of the Administration's education revenue-sharing bill.

ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

The principle of the avoidance of jurisdictional conflict, as we have seen, means that the federal government will permit states, counties, and other local governmental bodies to ignore the food needs of the poor with impunity, even though federal food assistance in the form of stamps, commodities, or lunches is readily available for distribution if only the other jurisdictions would cooperate. But when it comes to determining which individuals or families should be permitted to receive federal food aid in any given locality, assuming that the locality is willing to allow the aid to be handed out within its borders, the federal government is inconsistent in its adherence to local determinations. When the cost of the aid would be greater if local eligibility guidelines were followed, the Department superimposes its own and prohibits local deviation upward. When local standards tend to be more restrictive, hence cheaper than federal ones, the federal standards will permit local deviation downward.

Until the 1970 Food Stamp Act and the July, 1971, regulations promulgated pursuant to that Act, every state in the program was entitled to fix its own monetary standards of eligibility, with monthly allowable income limits for households of varying size. These ranged from a low of $180 in South Carolina to a high of $350 in New York; and diverse liquid assets ranged from $500 for four persons in New Mexico to $2600 for four in South Dakota. The 1970 Act replaced this hodgepodge with uniform national standards, e. g. $373 in monthly income for a family of four and $1500 in resources, with special scales to account for the unusual cost of living in Alaska and Hawaii. (Initially, USDA regulations governing uniformity would have barred welfare recipients from food stamp benefits if state welfare payment levels or resource tests were more generous than federal food stamp guidelines. This flaw, as has already been noted, was corrected by Congressional action.)

But Commodities An Exception

Although there is no apparent rational basis for distinguishing between food stamp and commodity users in terms of their income, the Department has refused and continues to refuse to propose comparable national eligibility standards. The reason? The Department frankly points out that "there would be a rather substantial increased cost in the program" and that "action by the Congress might cause us to move more quickly than we might otherwise do", since the matter is "complicated no doubt by some budgetary considerations."

The Department had a formal package of national eligibility guidelines informally developed by the spring of 1969. The past three years have lapsed with total inaction. Families of four with monthly incomes over $200 in North Carolina and Tennessee, $210 in Texas, and $215 in Delaware, Mississippi, and New Mexico cannot obtain commodities. The income ceiling in every state involved in the program is below (in many instances 25

to 40 per cent below) the uniform Federal level that would otherwise obtain. State commodity directors have called upon USDA to devise a nationwide eligibility standard, but the recommendation goes unheeded. Uniformity is abandoned in this instance for the sake of the budget.

The Department has, of course, feebly protested for years while county after county engrafted exception upon exception to the income participation standards. Indeed, the Department in the spring of 1969 released a survey disclosing that one township in Indiana (Boone) refused commodities to households with dogs, that another (Center) would not give commodities to drunk parents, that over 30 had a required residence period, that over 100 required employables to accept work as a precondition to participating in the commodity program, and that every county in Texas excluded non-citizens from access to federally-donated foods.

The Department expended much effort in surveying, little in correcting. It promulgated a regulation outlawing the citizenship and residency requirements, but left the more harmful work requirement rule untouched. The Department could readily have banned the latter but took the less decisive route of encouraging counties not to enforce it.

When twelve California counties refused to abide by the state plan of commodity program operations and denied commodities to all welfare recipients, the Department's response was to suggest that its regional director on the West Coast use his "direction and guidance" to persuade California to bring its counties into line. The Department informed attorneys for poor people in the counties that it "does not condone such barriers to full participation" and then did nothing but exhort and, ultimately, offer expense money to California to persuade the counties to comply with the law. The issue was resolved only when the poor brought suit and succeeded in pressuring the counties to open up eligibility to welfare grantees.

State School Lunch Standards

The school lunch story on eligibility shows uniformity stressed in order to curtail any state action to expand the scope and cost of federal food aid. Until Congress acted in the spring of 1970 to require schools to offer a free or reduced price lunch to every child whose family had an income below the federal income poverty guidelines, the schools were free to adopt any definition they desired of a child's "inability to pay" the full cost of lunch. In 1968, the Department had weakly suggested that states furnish family income charts to their schools and that children of commodity, food stamp, and/or welfare families be automatically included. By 1970 the Department was willing to supply prototype income scales as a basis for the development of uniform state scales. These were only the mildest intrusions upon the right of each school to be arbitrary in selecting needy pupils.

The 1970 amendments were not designed to end local variations based upon local economic conditions. The poverty standard was to be the floor below which no school could set its eligibility limits. The governing standard was still "inability to pay" so that schools were still entitled, indeed required, to feed free or reduced price meals to the non-poor whose family incomes were nonetheless too low to support 40 cents or more per child per day.

Accordingly, numerous cities such as Newark, New Jersey (where $7,500 a year for family of four is considered the minimum at which a family can survive) and Nome, Alaska (where the comparable figure is $13,100) set special high standards of their own, while 40 states exceeded the national poverty level.

The Administration's response to this exertion of states' rights was to propose in October, 1971, that the poverty level be the ceiling as well as the floor for determining whose lunches would be federally supported, thereby cutting off special Federal cash from over one million lunches a day in Newark, Nome, and the forty states. Congress effectively overruled this administrative imposition of uniformity for one year, allowing higher statewide figures previously in use to continue in effect. The Administration's response, besides accepting the inevitable which came in the form of a unanimous voice vote in both house of Congress, was to refuse Minneapolis and several other cities the right to include all schools with substantial poverty attendance in the free and reduced price part of the program.* So, where local deviation is expensive (up to $100 million was at stake), a principle of nationwide uniformity would prevail—if the Department could act unchallenged.

ADMINISTRATIVE COST-SHARING

While the freedom of states and other jurisdictions to devise their own eligibility standards is curtailed when federal funding sources may be affected, local freedom to administer program benefits to the detriment of those who should be served goes relatively unchecked.

The Department supplies food stamps and commodities free of charge to the states and/or counties. But the Department will not rely on this in order to exercise dominance over local program operations, since the local bodies have to furnish or finance the manpower necessary for certifying eligibles, for dispensing stamps and foodstuffs, and for publicizing program benefits. The Department does make some contributions to state and local costs of this nature: currently $48 million in the food stamp program for the 62.5 per cent federal share of certifying non-welfare recipients and providing outreach workers and fair hearing personnel; $20.9 million under commodity distribution for expanding warehousing, adding distribution points, and establishing better storage and distribution facilities; and $3.5 million in school lunch for state-level administrators (the local supervisory costs come out of the per meal federal reimbursement).

But the remaining administrative expenses borne by the state and local budgets are substantial enough that the Department uses them as an excuse for refusing to

**Congress agreed in 1972 to permit free and reduced price lunch service to continue to all 1971-1972 recipients, regardless of income level, on a "grandfather" basis that might cost as much as $200,000.*

take further responsibility for local performance. State and local funds, however, amount to considerably less than 10 per cent of overall program resources vis-a-vis food stamps, approximately 15 per cent in connection with commodity distribution, and 20 per cent in the provision of school lunches.

PROGRAM COST-SHARING

While the items provided by the family programs, food stamps and commodities, are almost entirely paid for by federal funds, school lunches and attendant child nutrition meals are more of a mixed financial bag. Indeed, federal laissez-faire seems to be most acute in this area, perhaps in acknowledgement of that fact.

The child nutrition programs offer a crazy quilt of required state matching payment*:

—12 per cent of the federal expenditure for across-the-board cash assistance.

—Up to 35 per cent of the federal outlay for special cash assistance for meals to the needy (the excess of the cost of producing meals over 46 cents).

—Up to 60 per cent of the federal financing for breakfasts (all non-food costs, including labor as minimum match, subject to federal decrease to no matching at all).

—33 per cent of the federal investment in equipment (25 per cent matching).

—Up to 60 per cent of the federal input into meals in day care center and summer recreation program meals (all non-food costs, including labor as minimum match, subject to federal waiver down to 20 per cent).

What is most absurd about the maintenance of this patchwork balance of federal and state/local monies is the determined insistence of the Department that it be rigorously maintained and adhered to in the face of Administration efforts to pass revenue-sharing measures and state and local demands for fiscal relief. Indeed, the Administration's own education revenue-sharing bill would wipe out the match of general federal cash for all lunches across-the-board. While these various requirements remain, however, they do provide the Department with an excuse for allowing school districts who pay at least some of their own way to run their programs with minimal federal scrutiny.

THE LEVEL AND QUALITY OF FEDERAL MONITORING

In our recommendations in 1968 we called for "private organizations [to] . . . continuously monitor and evaluate governmental programs" to feed the poor. We thought that this monitoring role had to be vested in private hands because we were disheartened at the complete lack of federal monitoring mechanisms for ascertaining whether each program was functioning to achieve its express purposes. We set forth our conclusion that accountability had bogged down at all governmental levels and pointed out that:

> In operation, each federal program has become the exclusive province of state or local governments. They have been given the power to abstain, the power to further constrict the class of eligible persons, and the power either by law or practice to decrease the level of benefits available to those who are eligible.

We still subscribe to that description of program reality, although the problem of manipulated eligibility has been mitigated somewhat by Congressional action. As we have already noted, the authority to make the critical decision of whether or not to have a program has been abdicated by the Department in favor of state and local governments. The Department retains the power to establish eligibility, but, for the most part, only uses it to obviate state or local action that might expand the program rolls beyond the confines of the budget. Finally, control of the benefits which are in fact delivered and which are not, resides wholly within the unfettered discretion of local administrators.

Selective Monitoring

USDA's basic concern in program monitoring is to assure that federal money is not being squandered or spent contrary to regulations and instructions. The Department is not primarily interested in making certain that federal money is being spent positively to achieve, as effectively as possible, the goal of eliminating hunger. The Department does have an elaborate monitoring mechanism—the Office of Inspector-General (OIG) in coordination with the Office of General Counsel and the Department of Justice—to detect and track down violators who divert program benefits to illegal ends. But monitoring of recipient complaints is handled by regional office personnel already overburdened with the paperwork of maintaining program flow.

A brief survey of the "monitoring" aimed at the various programs is illustrative. In 1971, $4.1 million of the appropriations for food stamps was channeled not into bonuses for the poor, but into 113 man-years of OIG investigators and clerical staff engaged in reviewing food stamp thefts from local issuing offices ($170,000, down from $872,000 the year before), trafficking in stamps (food stamp gangs unlawfully using authorization to purchase cards), sales of items not eligible for purchase with stamps such as soap (leading to the fining of retailers and suspension of stores from program participation), and counterfeiting of the coupons themselves (the Secret Service recovered $90,000 worth of counterfeit coupons in six cities).

Some issues are untouched: the failure to process food stamp applications swiftly (there was a three to five month delay in 1970-71, when New York City first opened its stamp program, between initial appearance and a full eligibility intake interview); and the failure to mail authorization-to-purchase-cards on time so that the recipients will have enough cash on hand to buy stamps. Nor is any federal official specifically responsible for exploring why working people should often have to spend an entire day every three months awaiting certification or why elderly persons have had to line up outside food stamp offices at 5 a.m. to be sure of being waited upon.

In 1971, OIG inspectors were given ten civil rights complaints related to food programs to investigate. No prosecutions ensued. But there were 158 prosecutions of food stores that violated program rules by giving recipients goods to which they were not entitled. Of the 1,070 food stamp complaints referred to OIG in 1970, over 85 per cent involved illegal use of stamps.

*See Appendix 4.

In the spring of 1970 the California Rural Legal Assistance sought to secure free food stamps and other special disaster food assistance for farm laborers in Northern California counties who had been put out of work due to heavy crop damage resulting from abnormal rain and flooding. The workers lost when the court found a conflict as to whether their inability to purchase adequate amounts of nutritious food was due to general economic conditions or specifically to the flooding. The conflict was produced by 14 county welfare directors who filed affidavits contending that the floods had not produced hunger or malnutrition. Those affidavits were prepared and collected by 14 OIG investigators who had been dispatched to round up evidence supporting the Department's denial of food aid.

The Department is equally concerned with unwarranted county efforts to distribute commodities. Each year the Food Distribution Division of the Food and Nutrition Service makes some 60 administrative analyses of distributing agencies' activities. The regional offices administratively review about half of the recipient agencies every year with teams composed of one regional staff member and a reviewer from the applicable state agency. OIG also conducts 200 audits annually of commodity programs in 20 states.

Such monitoring, however, rarely produces knowledge helpful in expanding distribution. When Senator Charles Percy, Republican of Illinois, asked the Department in the fall of 1971 how many counties serve recipients from centers which are in excess of 50 miles from the homes of recipients, the answer was "we do not have this information." Nor did the Department have specific data about the number of counties offering truck delivery to the vicinity of recipients or personal delivery at no charge to the crippled and housebound. To ask the Department for information about the actual distribution rates county by county is to wait a long time for no answer. To inquire about the critical matter of the time periods during which there is public notification that commodities are available is to receive the standard contentless response—"counties are encouraged to make distribution facilities accessible to all potential recipients."

The hard truth seems to be that satisfactory data about the obstacles to effective food delivery will never be forthcoming from the Department. It is content to provide so-called "standards of excellence" to state agencies as goals for food distribution programs using Department-supplied operating expense funds, but it makes no effort to compare the programs with the standards to see how well they match. The mixed reality of some success and much failure is not brought out unless private citizen groups are on the lookout. The Department is quick to act defensively to private criticism with the implication that citizen groups are not well-enough versed in program operations to understand. The lack of understanding, if such there be, is directly attributable to USDA's failure to explore and divulge the shortcomings of its own programs.

School Lunch Auditing

School lunch monitoring appears to be a little different. Forty man-years was expended by OIG in 1971 in auditing approximately 270 of 20,000 school districts annually or 1 per cent of the program. The audits are more concerned with the adequacy of service than the comparable audits of the family food programs. The objectives as summarized by OIG, include determinations that free and reduced price lunches were being served to all needy children (the audits did disclose that in some districts, through official apathy or misunderstanding of unclear federal guidelines, 27 per cent to 90 per cent of eligible children were not receiving their entitlement), whether there were procedures adequate to protect the anonymity of recipients (there were insufficient safeguards), whether controls over the receipt and disbursement of funds were used only to provide lunches to the needy (many non-needy children were included and many meal counts were erroneous leading to overcharges).

These audits did lead to action by the Department to redress the situation, but the 1 per cent outreach means that most program rule violators still go unchecked unless parents make complaints. Even when they do complain OIG, as a matter of policy, is not brought in unless, according to Assistant Secretary Lyng, "it's a question of gross violation of law or gross discrimination." Most complaints are termed "administrative" and routed back to the regional offices and thence back to the states and the school officials against whom complaints were lodged. It is only the persistence of citizen groups such as the Childrens Foundation that compels the Department finally to confront and remedy complaints.

Research

The food program research efforts of the Department underscore its lack of interest in finding out whom the programs are reaching and whom they bypass. The Department has no accurate figures on the percentage of eligible persons who receive food stamps or commodities, on the gross numbers of the elderly poor who are not helped, or on the racial composition of participants. With no idea of whom they are not feeding, the Department has no useful feedback enabling it to devise appropriate program changes to guarantee that as many as possible will be fed. After four years of virtual inactivity in investigating how best to serve the poor (other than to study some aspects of school food service), the Department finally agreed in August, 1972, to spend a total of $220,000 to study food program effectiveness in selected counties in California and Alabama in order to determine why families do not participate and what the actual nutritional impact of the programs is. The results may be ready by 1974. One thing they will not disclose is whether the poor, if given cash instead of stamps or commodities, might do as well, better, or worse in improving their nutritional status.

Summary

1. The reluctance of USDA to superimpose its authority over recalcitrant state and local governments in the administration of food programs has frequently impaired program success.

2. Municipal governments within food stamp counties are permitted by local option to refuse the stamp program in favor of commodity distribution.

3. Many local governments, however, that have repeatedly attempted to initiate food stamp programs have not been permitted to do so. USDA reviews state supplied lists of waiting counties and makes its own decision as to whom to admit.

4. Food stamp eligibility has been arbitrarily denied to Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands.

5. As of February, 1972, there were ten counties in the United States without any family food assistance program. This was a dramatic change from the figure of 480 in 1968. But the truth is that a national legal drive was necessary to bring about the action, with 26 lawsuits from 26 states seeking injunctions against those states and USDA beginning in November, 1968. USDA fought the suits and successfully resisted for six months an injunction granted in December, 1968, restraining it from refusing to put one of the two food programs in every California county. Similar resistance occurred affecting 88 Texas counties in 1969 and 1970.

6. Despite Congressional action calling for all states to develop plans extending school lunches to every school, USDA has offered no criticism of states that have not complied and has undertaken no meaningful efforts to require schools without kitchens to obtain food service equipment.

7. When it comes to eligibility standards governing federal food assistance, USDA has been inconsistent in its deference to local determinations. When the cost of the aid would be greater if local eligibility guidelines were followed, USDA has superimposed its own guidelines. When the cost of aid is more restrictive, hence cheaper, than federal standards, local standards have been allowed to stand.

8. Although uniform eligibility standards of $373 in monthly income and $1500 in resources have been established nationwide for food stamp recipients, states are still permitted to set their own income standards for commodity users. This is in spite of requests by state commodity directors for a nationwide eligibility standard.

9. State and local funds amount to less than ten per cent of overall program resources in connection with food stamps, 15 per cent in connection with commodity distribution and 20 per cent in the provision of school lunches. But USDA uses these figures as justification for little intervention in local and state decision making.

10. USDA's primary goal in program monitoring is to assure that federal money is not being squandered or illegally spent. It has little effective machinery to see to it that federal money is being used to eliminate hunger or to determine if the rights of food recipients are being violated.

11. USDA has not been interested in supporting research to determine whether and how its food programs succeed or fail in delivering a nutritious diet to all the poor.

V.

Local Program Defects and National Neglect

The consequences of the laissez-faire policies adopted by the Department of Agriculture in overseeing the implementation of federal food programs are readily foreseeable. We specified them four years ago. We repeat them now.

The hungry poor remain a Federal problem if you are a county commissioner or welfare official and a state or local problem if you are the Department of Agriculture. Local failures to deliver are supported by federal failures to intervene. No jurisdiction is willing to accept the full responsibility for seeing that the benefits Congress intended to bestow upon the hungry poor ever reach them.

Food Stamps—Certification

In 1968 we deplored rigid certification procedures administered by local officials which prevented many eligible persons from receiving food stamps. In particular, we condemned inadequate office hours at inconvenient offices, complex certification requirements, and the forced dependency of employees upon their employers' cooperation in supplying vital information to the certifying authorities.

Today we can repeat the same litany, noting that the Department appears, if anything, to have exacerbated these defects in the system, making certification more onerous than ever. The Department still exerts no supervision over the number of offices a particular county operates or the hours those offices are open to the public. That is left entirely to the local welfare budget, which is the easiest available target for economizers. In fact, the 1970 food stamp law may prove retrogressive in this connection because it presents local certification officers with the prospect of a substantial increase in caseload (a projected, but not likely, 1.7 million person increase flowing from the increased income eligibility levels and decreased purchase requirements) coupled with an equally substantial increase in the information required of each applicant (data on tax dependency, home meal delivery to the disabled, boarders and roomers and other unrelated persons living in the household as well as complete work registration forms are required for the first time). The 62.5 per cent federal share of certification costs for non-public assistance applicants is not, however, increased.

The applicants, most of whom have to return every three months to be certified once again, frequently find the application offices physically inadequate to accommodate the work load. In San Antonio, Texas, the offices were described by a witness before the Board of Inquiry as "a cattle-like corral" adjoining a glue factory.

Many applicants still have to spend an entire day or more waiting to be processed at an office in South Carolina or the District of Columbia. The breakdown that occurred in New York City in the fall of 1970 and spring of 1971 when applicants had to line up at food stamp offices in order to receive a date for an intake interview over three months away is likely to recur with greater frequency throughout the United States as the number of program eligibles rises. The lines of elderly waiting in freezing weather at 5:30 a.m. in the District of Columbia, to be sure to be processed in one day are lengthening, not growing shorter. In January, 1970, two small children perished in a fire in their home in the District while their mother was out waiting to see her food stamp case worker. Those who cannot afford to pay for transportation across town or across the county or for a baby-sitter to take care of small children and those who cannot take a day off from work (and have no night or Saturday office hours to utilize) are shut off from stamps regardless of need. They form a significant part of the 11.2 million unserved poor.

The certification forms today are, if anything, more complex than they were in 1968. The Department's certification instructions to state welfare agencies contain a sample application form that lists 21 question areas, most with several sub-sections. In Arkansas the application runs to five pages. Multi-hour interviews are common elsewhere. Bewilderment and reluctance to participate are the direct products. Anyone who is willing to certify to the truth of detailed list of names, addresses, dollar amounts, and other items cannot afford a lapse in memory.

Finally, the life-and-death stranglehold of the employer over his employee's right to stamps has been strengthened. Before it was up to each state to set verification policies. Now USDA has imposed a nationwide requirement that income be verified by the production of wage stubs or

other confirmatory documents. This means that farmworkers still have to rely on the statement of crew leaders or growers who often have an inducement to overstate wages. Otherwise they could well signal their non-compliance with minimum wage laws. Thus plantation laborers are still almost totally dependent upon the landowners for their benefits.

Food Stamps—Purchase

In 1968, we deplored the fact that the same delays and inconvenience that attended the certification process were repeated at the time of purchase. In 1968, the situation was better than it is now. In 1968, most participants were certified, received their authorization-to-purchase-card, and were sold stamps at the same place on the same day (or else got their card and exchanged it for stamps simultaneously). Today the usual procedure is that the authorization-to-purchase-card arrives in the mail several days after certification and the recipient has to make a second trip to a food stamp outlet (often a bank or credit union rather than the welfare office—or, in Seattle, the post offices) in order to buy stamps.

The reason for this two-step arrangement apparently is to guard against cheating. In January, 1971, it was disclosed that hundreds of recipients in the District of Columbia each month (738 in June, 1970) were receiving and negotiating two authorization cards and thereby obtaining double bonuses. To forestall the possibility that the same person could be certified on the same day in two separate intake offices, the Department ordered the District to deliver authorization cards by mail rather than over-the-counter upon certification in order to permit a computer check that would avoid duplication. To get a handful of cheaters, the entire program serving 110,000 people was brought to a three-day standstill while the authorization cards came through the mails, forcing the District Welfare department to make emergency cash grants worth $33,000 to families who needed money to buy food in the interim. Because of administrative problems, cash was used to replace stamps, if only on an interim basis.

Even if the authorization cards are delivered manually at the welfare office, more and more welfare offices are going out of the food stamp sale business in favor of banks. In early 1971, 36 per cent of the outlets were in welfare agencies, who were afraid of theft and unused to dealing with the security precautions required by the Department when selling stamps.

The banks may or may not be more accessible to the poor than welfare offices. The rural poor have great difficulty in finding conveniently located banks, and banks in urban ghettos may not deal in stamps. For example, when one bank in Northwest Washington, D. C. decided to stop selling stamps, elderly blacks in a nearby housing project had to take a bus four miles to the next closest bank willing to participate. In 20 Massachusetts suburban communities no banks traffic in stamps and substantial travel to secure the stamps elsewhere is necessary.

The banks charge 80 cents to $1.25 a transaction. How profitable this may be, we don't know. Many banks prefer not to let stamp buyers mingle with their regular customers. Accordingly, they limit the pool of stamp buyers they will serve. Many restrict the size of the food stamp issuance line at any one time or force stamp buyers to use specific windows or special out-buildings. At one point, until the community vigorously protested, the National Bank of Washington (owned by the United Mine Workers) required stamp buyers to stay outside and use the drive-in window during the winter. USDA, of course, permits local officials to handle these matters.

In 1968, we were critical of the low state eligibility standards. They remain basically unchanged and unpoliced. The Department, as we have seen, refuses to promulgate uniform nationwide guidelines because of its fear of increased expenditures to feed more needy people. The Department's disinclination to expand the pool of eligibles has been matched by the action of the states, which manipulate their published standards to achieve other goals, usually without any effort by the Department to compel them to adhere to their own rules. For example, in July, 1971, Arizona determined on its own to eliminate "hippie communes" from the commodity program by denying commodities to any household containing two or more unrelated members although this was not in keeping with the state's own welfare standards. USDA finally realized that this was occurring in February, 1972, but the Department's only affirmative action was to return without approval a formal request by Arizona to approve the new policy, which had already been in effect for eight months. The policy and USDA inaction against it persist.

What the state standards allow, local officials may deny, again with impunity. The county welfare director in Waco, Texas, would not talk about certification to pregnant women on Mondays or give commodities to an AFDC mother, despite Texas law to the contrary. Perhaps the most flagrant example of local perversion of the program was contained in a letter written by J. Newt Harber, Commissioner of Seminole County, Oklahoma, to his constituents:

> Dear Voters:
>
> Your commodity program is a service to you by your County Commissioner. Although they are furnished by the Federal Government. NO COMMISSIONER IS REQUIRED TO HANDLE THEM IF HE DOES NOT WANT TO DO SO, and in some counties the Commissioner will not distribute them.
>
> TO BE SURE that you continue to receive your commodities as you have in the past, GO TO THE POLLS ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 25th, AND VOTE FOR J. NEWT HARBER FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONER OF DISTRICT No. 2.

Commodity Distribution—Distribution

In 1968, we noted that "some people are discouraged from participating because the distribution depots where they must go to obtain commodities are too far away." USDA does attempt to spend nearly $20 million annually improving local distribution systems, but simply does not monitor the uses to which that money is put. Nor is the Department really concerned about convenience of time and location. It claims that "counties are encouraged to make distribution facilities accessible to all potential recipients," but then permits the warehouse in Barstow, California, to serve all of the poor in a 100-mile radius.

It makes no effort to gather any information on how many counties serve recipients from centers which are in excess of 50-miles from some recipients' homes. It collects no material at all about truck deliveries or other means of facilitating distribution.

The hours and days of distribution are also totally up to local authorities. Towns in Maine can limit those whose last names start with A to E to picking up their foodstuffs from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. on the second Monday of the month. A North Carolina county can, with impunity, turn away a 70-year-old illiterate woman who came a day late.

Distance problems are, of course, compounded by the difficulty of transporting the food back home. In 1968, the allotment for a family of four weighed 93 pounds. Now it is closer to 150 pounds. It may cost recipients more in time and money to get their free commodities than to use their non-free food stamps.

Commodity Distribution—Storage

In 1968, we found that the counties themselves did not distribute a sufficient quantity of surplus foods even though the items were available from the Department. Since then, the local control over what items to distribute has been cemented, with accent on the expense of warehousing. The Department has sought to relieve this expense with local grants, but has never attempted, as it could, to establish a nationwide policy of uniform distribution of food allotments. Instead, it is willing to repeat and repeat that "states and counties decide which USDA donated foods will be offered to program participants." So it happens in Ventura, California that the "storekeeper" can deny recipients their choice of juices or vegetables when the choice is in stock and withhold meat allotments.

Nor does the Department have a significant program of warehouse inspection to guarantee minimal standards of sanitation and refrigeration. Instead, food hazards go unchecked, old food is purveyed (four year old split peas in Clark County, Nevada), food is allowed to sit in 90 degree or 100 degree heat waiting for a recipient (cheese, in Farmington, New Mexico and Tuba City, Arizona), food packages deteriorate (corroded orange juice cans, broken bottles of corn syrup, ripped bags of corn meal) in numerous places, sometimes damaged products re-sold to dealers.

Commodity Distribution—Service

In 1968, we strongly urged USDA to work administratively to improve the rate of participation in the program through various measures. The answer to our request is contained in USDA's admission that it has no "figures county by county on the total number of persons potentially eligible for this program." On the other hand, it recently supplied to Congress, from somewhere, the following quantitative data on the degree of participation:

COUNTY	Estimated Needy Population[1]	Participation in Food Distribution Program[2]	Percent of estimated needy being served by Food Distribution Program
(HIGH)			
Aroostook, Maine	16,488	16,862	102
Noxubee, Miss.	6,912	7,325	106
Leake, Miss.	7,928	6,620	84
Macon, Ga.	4,559	3,975	87
Issaquena, Miss.	1,400	1,084	77
(LOW)			
Ormsby, Nev.	2,767	119	4
Fond Du Lac, Wisc.	14,463	1,188	8
Henderson, Tex.	8,721	990	11
Chatt'h'hee, Ga.	2,489	553	22
Elko, Nev.	3,238	446	14

[1] **Sales Management**, 1971 Survey of Buying Power, Estimated County Population with Income $0-2999.
[2] September 1971 Participation in the Food Distribution Program.

USDA obtains facts and figures when it is under the Congressional gun. It makes no attempt to do so in order to evaluate and compare county performance in reaching the poor. The Department claims that "we believe that it is desirable to have the state and local governments play a major role in solving the problem of needy people," but it evidences scant concern for whether they are in fact playing any role at all. Once responsibility is transferred, the Department attempts to make no guarantee that performance will result.

School Lunch—Full Participation

In 1968, we did not deal extensively with the nature and dimensions of the failure of the school lunch program because another citizens' group composed of five national women's organizations was preparing its own study. That study, *Their Daily Bread*, had its political repercussions and led to some significant Congressional-directed changes in the program's purposes, making service of a free or reduced price meal to every needy child the primary objective. The Department's refusal to cross state lines and energetically enforce program standards has undermined achievement of that objective in the same manner that Department refusal to encroach upon assumed state and local prerogatives not to feed the hungry has prevented elimination of hunger through the family food assistance programs.

In 1968, we lamented the failure to provide school lunch to two-thirds of the poverty-striken public school children. Today we deplore the continued failure finally to close the lunch gap and reach the remaining 10 per cent to 20 per cent who should be fed on a daily basis (putting to one side the issue of whether the same 10 million children are also entitled to breakfast should they desire it). The chief cause of that failure has been USDA's refusal to implement Congress' mandate that every state extend the lunch program to every school within the state as soon as possible. That refusal has, we have demonstrated, been motivated in part by budgetary concerns, in part by jurisdictional proprieties.

Whatever its basis, the results of the laissez-faire approach are clear: 18,000 schools without facilities, all, as the Department passively puts it, "well aware of the program, and for their own reasons choose not to [come into it]." To these 18,000 should be added an unknown number of schools that have equipment and/or facilities but which are not prepared to meet the full demand, because the equipment and/or facilities are deteriorating, incomplete, or otherwise inadequate. For these schools, the Department offers no financial assistance at all on the premise that the 18,000 are priority schools whether they participate or not.

So it is that an intentionally undernourished nonfood assistance budget and a reluctance to pressure the states to force schools to participate leave Boston and Philadelphia with a large number of inner-city children who have no place to go for lunch and nationally deprive nearly 900,000 poor pupils of the right to eat at noon.

School Lunch—Certification

In 1968, we described the lack of uniform standards for determining when a child should be fed free or at a reduced price. The standards now have been supplied: a uniform national floor consisting of the poverty level, with higher floors and ceilings at the option of the states. But minimal uniformity has not simplified certification. The determination of inability to pay, which should have been governed by a one-page or less affidavit form supplied by the Department, has mushroomed into a tangle of 13 separate income blocks in Iowa; requires costly notarization in Texas; probes into parental employment status in California; demands proof of special needs in Mobile, Alabama; requires lists of places where the family spends its money in Minatare, Nebraska; and put into general use a three-factored income scale (relating income level, family size, and number of children in school) calculated to confuse even the veteran tax-table decipherer. What was once supposed to be automatic feeding upon receipt of the filled-in form turns into a ten day delay to verify information.

School Lunch—Discrimination

The law forbids schools from singling out free lunch recipients and making their non-paying presence known. But abuses occur, nonetheless. West Junior High in Ponca City, Oklahoma, set a specially designated table for free lunch students; Pawnee, Oklahoma schools called out the chosen names over the intercom; San Antonio schools reserved "blue tickets" for the poor students; some Iowa schools gave free lunch recipients lunch cards embossed with identifiable black stars; schools in some Kentucky districts forced needy children to stand up and be counted. The law also prohibits schools from providing less for free lunch recipients than for those who pay. But who told South Dakota schools that they could not deny poor Indians seconds, while giving them to everyone else; or Canton, Oklahoma, schools that Indian students could not be limited to the bony parts (neck, back, wings) of chicken; or Manson, Maine, schools that they could not install a parallel private soup program for 10 cents; or Mobile, Alabama, schools that they could not offer better, so-called "teachers' lunches" to the well-to-do, while serving "type A" lunches to the poor; or Boston schools that they could not exclude dessert from lunch and charge extra for it?

The law forbids schools from using the threat of withdrawal of free lunch as a disciplinary measure. But the Department allowed schools in Oklahoma to threaten the withholding of meals if poor Indian children were five or ten minutes tardy (the District of Columbia did this with breakfast); Cherokee, Oklahoma, schools to deny grades until lunch bills were paid; Springfield, Massachusetts, principals to discipline pupils by excluding them from lunch. A Nebraska school superintendent even wrote to a Mexican-American father offering to give his two children free lunches if and only if the father would agree to sell the schools particular lots of land for a stated price.

All of these may be isolated incidents of violation, but the pattern of their occurrence and of the Department's reluctance to police its own turf is revealingly repetitive.

Inadequacies of the Appeals Process

Food stamp recipients have been granted no formal outlet for making known their demands for non-statutory program changes to federal, state or local officials. They are guaranteed the right to a fair hearing when their benefits are about to be terminated or reduced or when they are otherwise aggrieved by the action of the state and local officials.

That hearing applies only to their case and does not necessarily generate rights for their fellow recipients. The hearing examiner, in any event, is still going to be a state or local official, even though not one previously involved in the case.

The same hearing process holds for commodity distribution, although it was provided by judicial decision, not Department of Agriculture regulations, until March, 1970, when the Secretary, faced with a lawsuit, agreed to abide by a 1969 Supreme Court decision and require states to hold fair hearings. Fair hearing boards, of course, are composed, for the most part, of local officials, and efforts to broaden the composition of such boards have not met with much success. In New Hampshire the state legal anti-poverty agency sought unsuccessfully to have each panel composed of a representative of the county, the local community action group and a surplus food recipient. The state commodity distributors denied the proposal and left the county commissioners free to appoint fair hearing boards of their own choice.

The parents of school children have no right to participate in state and local decisions about income eligibility levels or any other major program issues. They are entitled to be notified about the program's standards and procedures after the fact, either by mail or notices sent home with their children. They, too, have hearing rights if their children are denied lunch benefits.

The poor increasingly have had to turn to what ought to be the last—not the first—repository of their complaints —the courts. Thus the Department's Office of General Counsel has continually increased its budget for additional attorneys to handle the legal challenges. The resulting man-years spent in fighting the poor in the courts (16 man-years budgeted for 1972) are as great as those that are expended on monitoring state and county welfare agencies and local school boards to make sure they are delivering all the benefits to which the needy are entitled.

Summary

Food Stamps

1. Certification procedures are time-consuming and unduly complex. Detailed information required of applicants is bewildering. State incomes must be verified by employers, a situation which, particularly in the case of migrant farmworkers, puts the workers at the mercy of employers who have an inducement to overstate wages or otherwise signal their non-compliance with minimum wage laws.

2. Delays in purchases of food stamps are built into the certification process. Authorization cards are not given simultaneously with certification, thus requiring the recipient to make a second trip to the food stamp outlet in order to buy stamps.

3. With more and more banks handling food stamp sales and limiting the pool of stamp buyers they will serve, many recipients are forced to travel long distances to other outlets. Some banks restrict the size of food stamp issuance lines and assign food stamp buyers to special windows or make them stand in line outside. USDA exerts no control over local implementation.

Commodity Distribution

1. USDA has refused to promulgate uniform nationwide eligibility guidelines, thus allowing state governments to impose their own standards. State standards may also be denied by local officials with impunity.

2. The location of distribution centers remains a discouraging factor in commodity participation, and USDA makes no effort to gather information on how many counties serve recipients from centers which are in excess of 50 miles from recipient homes. Hours and days of distribution are left to local discretion.

3. Storage of commodities has not improved significantly in the past four years. USDA does not have a significant program of warehouse inspection to guarantee minimal standards of sanitation or refrigeration.

4. USDA makes little attempt to obtain facts and figures on persons potentially eligible to receive commodities for the purpose of evaluating county outreach performance.

School Lunch

1. USDA refusal to cross state lines and vigorously enforce program standards has frustrated achievement of the Congressional objective of bringing all needy children into the school lunch program.

2. The process of determining inability to pay for school lunches is unnecessarily complex and confusing to the parents of potential participants.

3. Despite legal prohibitions against discrimination in the serving of free lunches, abuses persist and USDA is apparently unwilling to intervene in local situations.

Appeals Process

The inadequacies of the local appeals process has meant that the poor increasingly have been forced to turn to the courts for redress of grievances.

VI.
In Conclusion

This has been our analysis of the past four years. The failures are numerous and the most obstructionist agency has been the Department of Agriculture. Less apparent, is that a great deal of credit must go to dedicated men and women in both houses of Congress and in both political parties who have struggled mightily to bring about the positive actions that have come.

America, thus, is not indifferent to its poor. There is no conspiracy to starve women and babies. But neither has ending hunger become so vital a matter as to put it above compromise on the basis of budgetary constraint, governmental jurisdictional boundaries, or political expediency. By playing politics as usual with the issue, men in authority have done their nation a tragic disservice.

A Potential Solution

What is to be done? Is the answer, as we believed in 1968, to improve existing food programs, especially food stamps? Is the solution, as we suggested then, to guarantee ready access to food to the needy everywhere in the nation? Are more and better food programs the best means to end hunger?

We believe from the vantage point of 1972, that the jigsaw puzzle pieces of food programs the federal government has carved out since 1935 (32 in the area of child nutrition, 5 for families) will never mesh to cover all of the hungry poor. The government began, we believe, by asking the wrong question: "How can we feed the poor?" The answer almost inevitably, was this plethora of programs of bureaucrats, by bureaucrats, for the assumed benefit of the poor.

"We" want to make sure that "they" eat correctly. So we send out $50 million worth of nutrition aides to instruct "them" in how to invest their 31 cents a meal.

"We" want to be certain that "they" do not waste their food resources on bingo or alcohol or narcotics or anything else non-nutritious. So "we" exclude carbonated beverages from the food stamp eligible item list because participants "could go into grocery stores and be indistinguishable from other patrons of the stores. . ." So "we" refuse to permit "them" to get cash as change in food stamp transactions where less than 50 cents is at stake.

"We" want to guarantee that impoverished mothers of infants under one give their children more milk and formula. So "we" give "them" food certificates for milk and formula "they" previously were buying, and the rest of the family spends the extended income on other needs.

"We" don't want "them" to have to make any hard choices among food, rent, medical care, clothing or other needs. So "we" propose to tie up 30 to 50% of "their" purchasing power in the form of food stamps rather than give "them" the cash they might reallocate elsewhere.

The results of such misguided paternalism are the stuff of this critique. They constitute the history of food relief for the past 37 years — a history of millions bypassed and still unserved and millions more receiving only partial aid under programs that can never fill the gap.

The question ought to have been — from the beginning — not how can "we" feed "them" but how can they feed themselves. We should always have focused not on creating an administrative jungle of mechanisms for delivering food to the poor, but on developing the simplest, most dignified method of enabling them to determine when and how to meet their own food needs. We should always have acted as our brother's helper, not his feeder. *An adequate income obtainable in a just, non-degrading manner has always been the solution.*

The social costs of our institutionalized distrust of the poor have been undeniably great, primarily in terms of the loss of human potential, undermined by and forever lost to malnutrition, and secondarily in terms of operating expenses wasted in support of the battalion of caretakers. It is not difficult to document these costs.

Non-Participation—Cost Barriers

The stark facts of non-participation are self-evident. Under current income eligibility guidelines, approximately 30 million Americans qualify for food stamps (26 million poor and nearly four million just above the poverty line of $4,110, but under $4,476 in annual income for a family of four). Perhaps 24 million of these people live in areas that furnish food stamps. Only 11.8 million receive

the stamps. What happens to the other 12.2 million? They are either program push-outs or program dropouts.

The former predominate. Slightly more than seven million of the 14.5 million people on public assistance received stamps in December, 1971. All were eligible. The non-participants are among those who choose not to participate in a program that inexorably demands they invest a specific amount of their monthly income in food one or two times a month. For instance, a family of four earning $200 a month has to come up with $26.50 every two weeks or $53 on or about the first of each month. A family of six with $350 from work or welfare has to pay out $48.50 semi-monthly or $97 monthly.

The poor are unable effectively to control their meager cash flow to meet the program's inflexible demands. They may get paid on the first, but be out of sufficient money to pay for the second installment of stamps on the 15th because of intervening needs. They may have the full sum available by the 20th, but that is too late. *The food stamp program was not and cannot be tailored to match the flow of their income and expenditures.*

The new regulations now in effect nationwide try to ease the iron rigidity of the purchase requirement by permitting any household to elect to purchase as little as one-quarter of its allotment at issuance time. But the household cannot recoup that portion of its stamp allotment it is unable to pay for, which means that it will be only a one-fourth or one-half program participant. Nor are there any indications yet of widespread reliance upon partial purchase as a means of escape from the harsh cost bind.

On the other hand, if the poor were to be given cash, they could buy food when they wanted to so long as the cash held out. If they chose to allocate some of their limited funds to finance medical care instead of food in any given month they would not be denied the rest of their food-related cash grant. That is not the case with stamps. For example, if the family of four earning $200 a month could only afford one-fourth of its food stamp allotment one month in cash ($13.25 for $27 worth of stamps instead of $52 for $108), the boost in its food purchasing power for that month would amount to only $13.75 ($27—$13.25). Were food stamps to be eliminated and the monthly bonus translated into an extra cash grant of $54, the family could deploy that $54 as it chose. Indeed, it might apply $30 to doctors' bills and still have $10.25 more food purchasing power than the food stamp users ($54—$30 vs. $13.75).

The Administration revised its welfare reform program in the spring of 1971 to meet suggestions by the House Ways and Means Committee that food stamps be converted to cash, thereby raising the cash floor for families of four without outside income from $1,600 to $2,400 in states such as Mississippi, Arkansas, Alabama, Louisiana, and South Carolina. Prior to that, the welfare proposal of $1,600 coupled with the food stamp allotment attendant upon such income ($34 cash for $108 in stamps) would have forced stamp users into the following pattern:

	Month	Year
1) a) Cash (welfare)	$133.33	$1,600
b) Less cash spent for food stamps	—34.00	—408
c) Total cash available	99.33	1,192
2) Value of food stamps	108.00	1,296
3) Total purchashing power (1c + 2)	207.33	2,488
4) % total purchasing power tied up in food	52%	

It was only the cashing-in of stamps that saved the $1,600 poor from having to devote 52 per cent of their purchasing power to food or be penalized by receiving no food aid whatsoever. For families at the $3,000 income level, the percentage of purchasing power in food stamps would be 38 per cent, absent any merger of stamps and welfare. As Florida Representative Sam Gibbons argued:

> What family in America, poor or otherwise, wants to be compelled to receive over half its total purchasing power in the form of scrip which can only be used for one of its needs—food—and this on penalty of receiving no family food assistance at all unless it submits to this compulsory budgeting?
>
> What family wants even more than one-third of its purchasing power tied up in food, untouchable in emergency? The average American family spends only 16.5 per cent* of its disposable income in food. Granted, the average family's income is higher than that of the typical poor family, but must the poor be locked into a forcible formula which makes them spend three times the average for food alone?

Recently, Senator McGovern called for an income guarantee to the non-working poor of $3,400 in cash and $600 worth of food stamps. To the extent that this focuses on the possibility that, under the complex pattern for determining welfare grant levels in the Administration's welfare proposal (some households might not get the full value of the food stamps bonuses they now receive translated into cash), such an approach makes sense. No one should be hurt by welfare "reform." To the extent that this expresses his estimate that Congress would give $3,400 with food stamps on top more readily than $4,000 in cash, it may be good strategy. To the extent that this is a determination that $3,400 in cash plus $600 in food stamps is better than $4,000 in cash, the plan ignores the interests of the poor.

Non-Participation—Non-Cost Obstacles

We have previously detailed many non-cost barriers to participation in the food stamp program, barriers involving certification and issuance, discriminatory treatment at issuing banks, delays in mailing, inconvenient locations of issuing offices. These difficulties and the problem of securing the right amount of cash at the right time are compounded by the problems associated with using the stamps at grocery stores. Some stores, in urban and rural areas alike, simply refuse to accept food stamps, no matter how

**In 1972 that figure is 15.6 per cent including 2.8 per cent for food away from home.*

instantly redeemable at the applicable bank and Federal Reserve they may be. Not only do recipients have to bypass nearby or preferred stores to travel to find an accepting store (nearly 150,000 retail grocers do accept stamps), but they are singled out for discriminatory treatment in the stamp stores' check-out lines.

Food stamp users are just like regular patrons except that regular patrons do not have to separate their purchases into two separate piles—one containing most foodstuffs which may be paid for with food stamps, the other composed of non-food stamp items such as napkins or soap, or clearly-labelled imported food items, including lean Argentinian hamburger. (The limitation on the use of imported meat means that the poor are the only American consumers not to benefit from recent relaxations of quotas on inexpensive imported meat.) Indeed, there may even be a third pile for returnable bottles whose contents are stampable, but whose form is not so when a bottle deposit must be paid. Stamps were declared out-of-bounds for container deposits following a December, 1971, Department of Agriculture ruling effective March, 1972.

Regulations governing the use of stamps at "take out" eating establishments make less sense. For example, food stamp recipients may not use their stamps to buy carry-out orders of fried chicken, but they may use them to buy ice cream.

Suppose the food stamp customer has to offer $2.50 worth of stamps in payment for $2.45 worth of approvable groceries. Does the clerk accept the stamps and give the user a nickel in return? Not if the store wants to keep its certified status. The store must as of March 1, 1972, as was the case before 1971, give the customer a token or credit slip redeemable only in eligible food and only at that store (or its chain counterparts). The House Agricultural Appropriations Subcommittee apparently became upset in the summer of 1971 when it discovered that stamps were being exchanged for cash in change transactions and persuaded the Senate to join in urging that the "threatening" practice be stopped.

The Degradation of the Poor

With distrust in the ability of the poor to take care of themselves as its hallmark, the stamp program carefully and prominently labels each and every recipient a potential wastrel. Stigma automatically accompanies every stamp-bought bag of groceries. There is no way to avoid being advertised to the store-going public as "poor", no way to hide the fact that a stamp user's freedom of choice differs from the same freedom exercised by the 200 million other Americans who buy their food with cash.

The food stamp poor do not suffer their indignities gladly. Their complaints point to a precise remedy, the substitution of cash for stamps. At a nationwide meeting of 17 local and national organizations committed to improving the food stamp program in February, 1972, the groups proceeded to criticize the program as intolerably degrading, to demand that the purchase of non-food items be authorized, to call for permission to receive cash for change less than 50 cents, to recommend that restaurant meals be purchaseable with stamps by the elderly and disabled. All of these reforms are disguised demands for stamps to be replaced by cash.

Most spokesmen and advocates for the poor support switching cash for stamps. Dr. George Wiley, Executive Director of the National Welfare Rights Organization, has said that:

> Stamps are demeaning. It's a way of singling out poor people. It's saying you can't trust poor people.

President Johnson's Commission on Income Maintenance agreed. So does the Nixon Administration which supports cash rather than stamp aid because it "provides the maximum flexibility and personal responsibility for the individual."

The users of stamps daily express their interest in abolishing stamps in favor of cash by acting to violate the regulations governing their use. Stamps are highly negotiable. Many persons sell them at face value or at a discount to friends, strangers, or local grocery stores. Every week since the beginning of 1971 the Department has issued news releases announcing that, on the average, three to five stores have been suspended from participating in the program for as much as a year for permitting ad hoc cash-ins or allowing food stamps to be exchanged for cigarettes, toilet paper, soap, or other non-food items carried in grocery outlets. The Department maintains a large squad of compliance officers who receive reports of suspicious activity and conduct visits to the store both educational (to remind them of the rules of the program) and compliance-oriented (to investigate and warn).

The Administrative Burden

The food store compliance effort is by no means the only aspect of administering the food stamp program that consumes departmental resources that might be better spent in the form of cash grants to individuals. There is no clear price tag on the policing effort, but the best estimates put it in excess of $5 million annually.

What about other forms of program fraud, such as counterfeiting of stamps? The Department has persuaded the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to place the same detailed etching of Lincoln on the $5 food coupon that is on the $5 bill to deter counterfeiters. But theft still accounts for nearly half a million in stamp losses a year (the favorite area for thieves used to be West Virginia until standards were tightened) and negligent losses cost the Department $230,000 in Illinois alone in 1971.

Another of the Department's major program-related expenditures is for the printing of the coupons. To produce enough of this second form of money to yield a monthly average of $276 million in coupons the Treasury has to allocate four of its thirty printing presses for 24 hours a day at an annual cost to Agriculture of $15 million.

The Department's food stamp headaches are regulatory as well as fiscal. It has to wrestle with the fact that it has been responsible for creating three forms of scrip for food: the stamps, food credit slips (as change for 50 cent food stamps), and food certificates (25 cent pieces of paper good only for milk, formula, or instant baby cereal). A fourth form of scrip is an invention of the Office of Economic

Opportunity's dying Emergency Food Program: food vouchers to enable recipients to buy food stamps or groceries directly. It is possible in some localities for all four varieties of food "money" to be in use at the same time. The result is a regulation such as the following dealing with use of food certificates when purchase costs do not meet the exact cash equivalent of the certificate:

> 7 C.F.R. Section 265.8(g) Change shall not be given for certificates. Authorized retail food or drug stores may accept certificates only in an amount equal to or less than the total amount due for eligible food. When the amount of the certificates tendered is less than the total amount due for eligible food, the recipient shall pay the difference in cash or may use Food Stamp Program Food coupons if the recipient (other than a proxy) is participating in the Food Stamp Program and the store is authorized to accept food coupons.

The Department's administrative problems in controlling the proper flow of "non-cash" are compounded by those of the state and local food stamp officials. New Mexico is faced with an increase in state-wide administrative costs of from $1.3 to $3.4 million and the legislature won't appropriate the money to hire the people to implement the program. Louisiana claims it cannot afford to pay for any fair hearing officers for most of 1972. Every state has a tale of fiscal woes flowing from dispensing food stamps.

None of the states are anxious to engage in much outreach work because they are federally reimbursed for only 62.5 per cent of the cost of personnel involved in outreach: moreover, outreach expands the rolls, which has the additional impact of requiring more stamp certification workers (again 62.5 per cent at federal expense) and more funds for stamp issuance for which the federal government pays nothing at all. It is this latter sum particularly, which averages between 75 cents and $1.00 a transaction (generally paid to banks), with each household entitled to a minimum of two transactions a month or 24 a year, that bites deeply into local budgets. Issuance alone accounts for approximately $100 million a year or slightly under five per cent of bonus costs. When certification, outreach, and fair hearing expenses are added on, it is understandable why the State Commissioner of Public Welfare in Massachusetts should have concluded in February, 1972, that it was the better course to expand and improve the commodity distribution program and not food stamps since:

> In terms of cost to the users of the program, and the whole range of advantages versus disadvantages, I believe the commodity program provides greater benefits to the poor. The commodity program is far less costly and cumbersome to administer than the stamp program. . . The commodity program also provides jobs for Massachusetts citizens. . . The economic benefits of the Food Stamp Program, on the other hand, fall mainly to participating banks. . .

Who is for Food Stamps?

There are, of course, some substantial food stamp constituencies as there would be for any program that has 11.8 million participants a month. Perhaps the most vocal opposition to any cashing-in of stamps would come from the food industry, the representatives of the 150,000 retail grocers whose profits have been shown to rise by an average of 8 per cent when a community gets food stamps. The general counsel of the National Association of Retail Grocers makes their priorities obvious: "This [food stamps] is one government program that is strongly supported by an industry. It helps the poor and needy, and it helps business, too."

Some state and local employers whose livelihoods depend on food stamp certification or issuance might become jobless were stamp distribution to be terminated. There are even companies such as Pitney-Bowes who are riding the program's crest by marketing a "Food Stamp Counter" that "counts and endorses 400 stamps a minute." As Pitney-Bowes puts it:

> The bigger the Food Stamp Program grows (and it's growing bigger all the time), the more time you have to spend counting and endorsing stamps that are presented to your store. Time that can be more profitably spent manning checkout counters or replenishing shelves. . . Our speedy Food Stamp Counter does the whole job. . . With an optional attachment, it batches, too. . . You can lease it from Pitney-Bowes for only $2.00 a day.

Finally, there are the recipients themselves who understandably constitute a built-in lobby for the program's continued existence because, while getting the stamps may be exhausting and demeaning, nonetheless the stamps are infinitely superior to the nothing that preceded them.

The self-interest of these groups in retaining food stamps is understandable. The concern of the nutritionists is somewhat less comprehensible. If having stamps means (as current statistical patterns reveal) that one-half of the eligible individuals will never receive their benefits, while some of the participating half will try either to cash in a portion of the stamps illegally or else use a portion of them for non-nutritious purchases, how does transforming stamps into equivalent cash and doubling the number of recipients create any greater danger that the poor will be malnourished? To assume that is to assume that at least two out of every three poor households will drastically misallocate their cash income and ignore their food requirements either because that income is too low to satisfy other basic needs or because adequate nutrition is not highly valued.

Whither Commodity Distribution?

There is no way to deliver a storageable month's supply of desirable foods containing 30 days' worth of recommended dietary allowances to every poor family in America, not unless we were practically to parallel the existing system of food enterprise, including buying freezers for the poor. No one wants to retain commodities—the recipients, the President, the nutritionists, HEW—no one, that is, except the Department and some processors to whom the Department is politically responsive, since it is only the processors, not the growers or the ranchers, with

whom the Department contracts and who profit any way from the Department's food purchasing activities.

Allowing the poor to select their own commodities when they want them, in the size packages they want them, and where they want them is the preferred substitute. Stamps can help perform that task. Cash does it better. If there still remain edible surpluses what better recipients than the malnourished prisoners and patients in our institutions?

Whither Child Nutrition?

Cash is clearly the solution to the second most significant problem confronting the school lunch program, which is overt and covert discrimination against the recipients of free and reduced price lunches. The cash would have to flow in sufficient amounts from federal, state, and local governments to local school boards to permit every school to offer a free lunch to any pupil who wanted one. Classes and textbooks, after all, are free. A nutritious lunch, as well as breakfast where the demand exists, are also integral parts of the school day and should be supplied without requiring any child to pay. The cost of the lunch (approximately 60 cents per pupil each year) should be subsidized by all levels of government with the federal government shouldering at least three-fourths or 45 cents of the burden, just as the federal government now pays between 45 and 50 cents for each free meal served a needy child.

In addition to this general assistance, the federal government would have to continue to help schools without food service facilities or with facilities that are either deteriorated or insufficient to meet the demand. The help would come in the form of financial aid to purchase the necessary equipment, hopefully without any requirement for state or local matching. This federal program is essential to overcome the primary barrier to universal school lunch service for the poor.

Whither Other Nutrition Programs?

Cash aid would do away with the need for federal food assistance programs except for the general school lunch subsidy and equipment aid referred to above, and for two programs designed to feed those who cannot be expected to feed themselves: the very young, whose mothers and fathers are at work or otherwise absent from the home, and the elderly.

Since the principle of furnishing cash, not food, is that the poor will do a better job feeding themselves than bureaucrats could, the principle has a natural limitation. It does not extend to those who must be fed by others if they are to survive nutritionally. Poor children in day-care centers must be furnished meals. Poor elderly persons who are physically unable to prepare meals for themselves and are housebound should have food brought to them at home in ready-to-eat form. Poor elderly persons who could cook if they so chose, but are psychologically deterred from doing so because they lack the will to eat alone or who are not housebound, but lack effective cooking facilities in their rooms or apartments, should have meals prepared for their benefit in group settings in community centers and the like.

The solution here is a major expansion of the special food service program for day-care children (or, preferably, a nationwide child development program that would nourish as well as educate children under six) and a major expenditure of funds and energy to implement the newly-passed nutrition program for the elderly (the President is apparently seeking $100 million for this purpose in fiscal year 1973).

To Help Them Feed Themselves

Cash will not completely solve the problems analyzed above unless (1) the cash provides an adequate income floor for everyone, permitting each member of the household to afford and receive at home, at work, or in school, nutritious meals three times a day, regardless of whether the member is an infant, elderly, pregnant, nursing or adolescent (with no household receiving less financial assistance in dollar amounts than it now obtains from welfare and food stamp bonuses) and (2) that income is furnished through a simple, comprehensible, exclusively federally-controlled administrative mechanism that does not degrade the human dignity of the recipients of the income or destroy their family life.

That is a tall order for a social program to fill. But it is the only feasible way to end hunger and malnutrition in America.

There is no interim solution. There are no half-way measures of reform that will get the job done. It may prove necessary for humanitarian purposes to work at improving the food stamp program until such time as its replacement is ready in the form of adequate income maintenance. Undeniably, there is still need to extend program eligibility (and awareness) to every poor person in every county and township in the county; to end the illogical requirement that those who have too little money to begin with must pay for their stamps or receive none; to boost stamp allotment values to be equivalent to an adequate diet in the context of rapidly rising food prices. But all of these remedies should be recognized for what they are—*tinkering, however beneficial, with a food assistance system that has not worked, is not working, and never will work.*

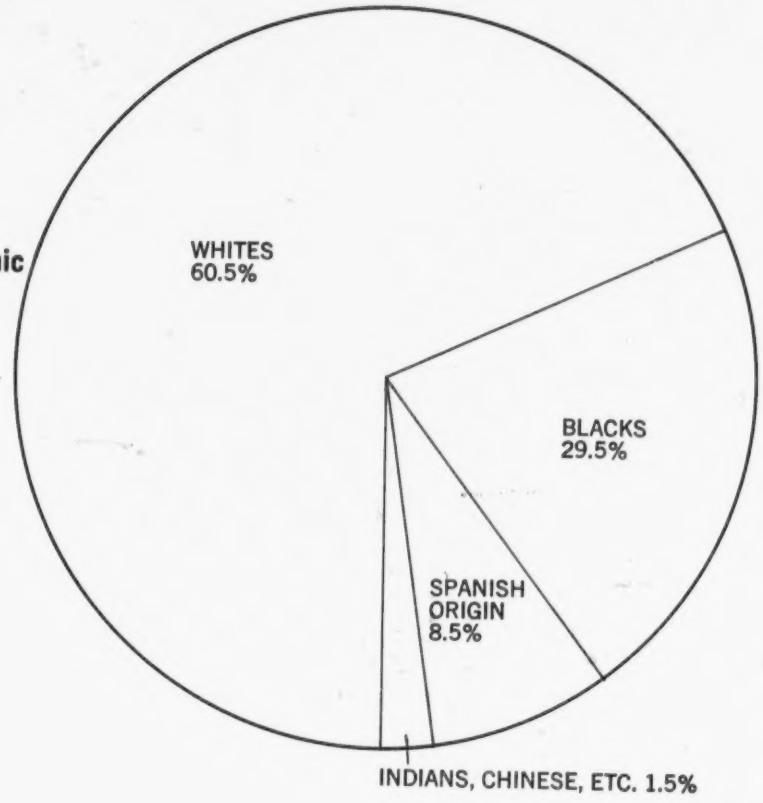
We cannot hope to feed the poor.

We can only guarantee them the opportunity to feed themselves.

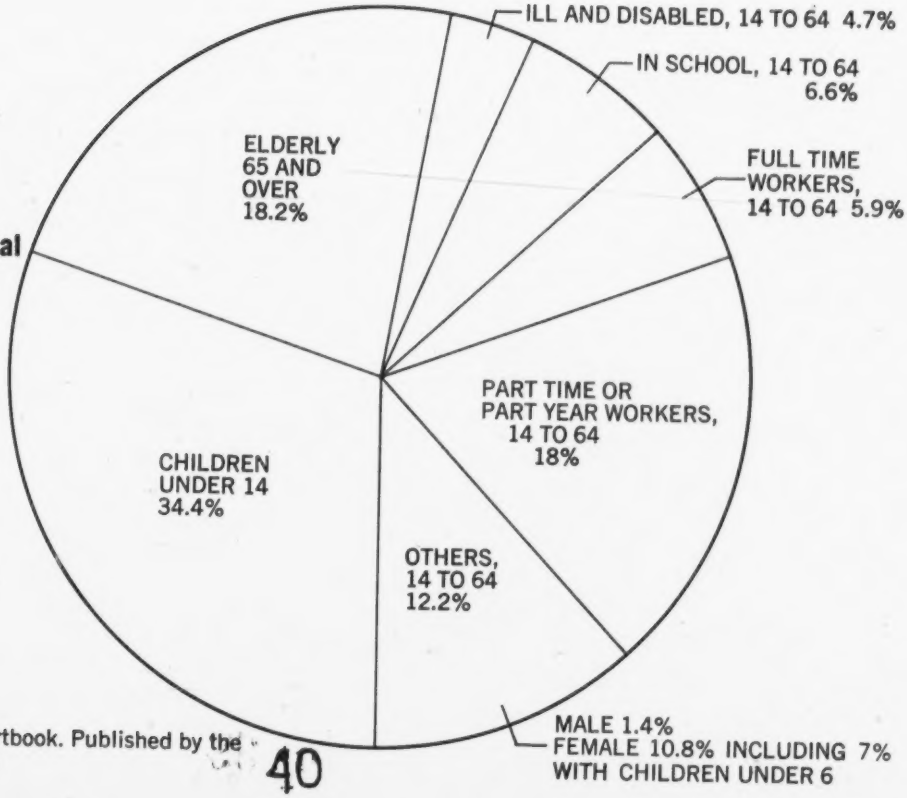
Appendix 1

POVERTY IN 1970

Poverty and Race/Ethnic Origin

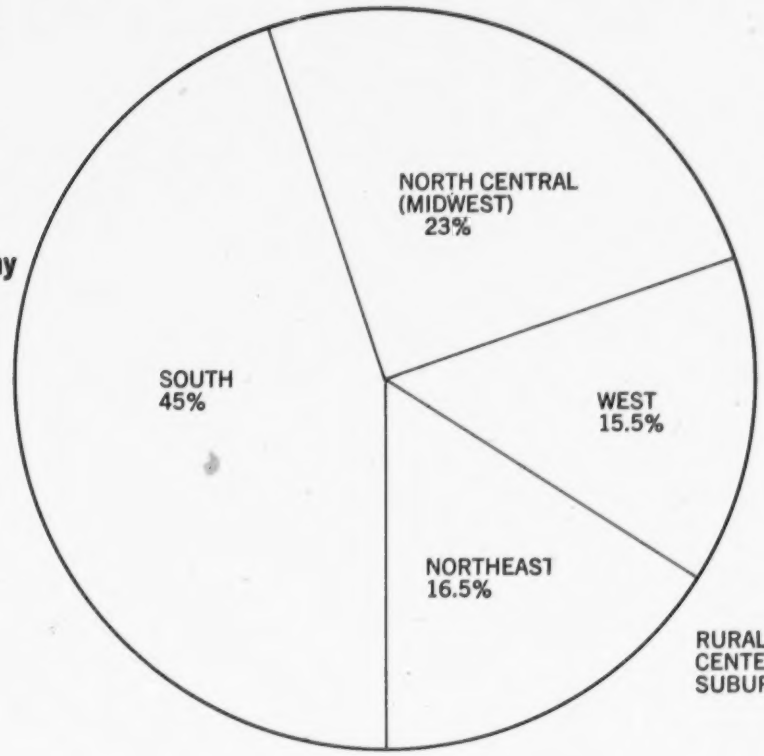


Poverty and Work Potential



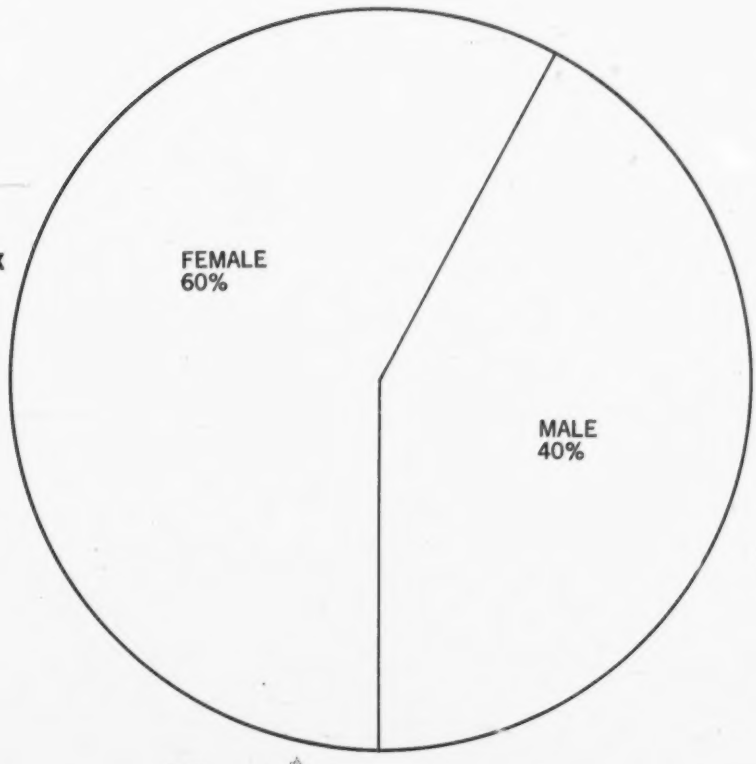
Source: The Poor in 1970: A Chartbook. Published by the Office of Economic Opportunity

Poverty and Geography



RURAL 47.6%
CENTER CITY 32%
SUBURBAN 20.4%

Poverty and Sex



Appendix 2
The Poverty Line

Because of the stringent approach adopted in designing the poverty line, millions of people who require assistance in meeting food, shelter, job and other human needs, but whose incomes exceed the arbitrary line, have been excluded from program participation and inappropriately classified as "middle-class."

The poverty line was originally developed in 1964-65 by the Social Security Administration (SSA) with the best of intentions and the worst of data. Since clothing and shelter needs were geographically distinct, while food appeared to be a national constant, the SSA focused on ascertaining the lowest outlay at which, according to USDA, an American housewife with average home-making skills could provide her family with a diet meeting recommended minimum nutritional goals. This level of food purchases—the Economy Food Plan which had been suggested by USDA—was then combined with the best available estimates of the percentage of income devoted to food expenditures by low-income families (⅓) to arrive at the poverty index.

The two components at the core of this definition of poverty were and are both arbitrary and inaccurate. The faults of the Economy Food Plan have been set forth on page 13. It offers at best an emergency diet, not long-term sustenance. It is deficient in several vitamins and trace minerals. It ignores significant factors of age, conditions, exertion and region. It gives the average American housewife less than a 50-50 chance of nourishing her family adequately.

The 33⅓% income input into food was derived from a 17 year old food consumption survey which had scant scientific validity because it was based upon individual recall. Longitudinal surveys of what poor families actually spend on food over a period of time do not exist.

When SSA published its poverty criteria, it announced that they were appropriate for general overall evaluation, but not suitable for use as individual criteria of needs. Policy-makers promptly proceeded to ignore this warning and utilized the criteria to determine social program scope and eligibility. SSA proposed revising the original measure in 1969 to reflect 1965 information on family food consumption patterns which would have resulted in raising the index by at least 10%. SSA even suggested investigating alternate models of income adequacy based on factors other than food. The response of the Bureau of the Budget (now OMB) was to abandon any analysis of the poverty measure while assigning no other agency responsibility for revising it.

As a result, the components of the poverty level have remained frozen since the beginning, although each year an adjustment occurs to reflect price changes in all items (not merely food) contained in the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The poverty measure would be bad enough were it applied in any one month to determine who is needy, but, instead, it is used on an annual basis and thereby overlooks millions of people who fall below it for weeks or months at a time during a given year. The truth is that the proper measure is not the cost of buying some fixed set of goods and services, but rather the cost of participating in a social and economic system that continuously transforms luxuries into necessities.

Appendix 3

1968 Recommendations of the Board of Inquiry into Hunger and Malnutrition in the United States

Preamble

A. There must be a commitment by the nation to the proposition that every child has the right to an adequate diet. What do we mean by a "commitment"? We mean more than a statement by the President, or the preamble of a law. We mean that there be an organized set of laws and executive policies framed to achieve this objective. What is our model? It is not the federal anti-poverty program, which has been a great and valuable force but has never represented an actual commitment to eradicate poverty. Our model, instead is a commitment such as we made to expand industrial and farm production during World War II; to explore space and place a man on the moon; or to build a gigantic interstate highway system. In contrast, there has not been in this century a comparable commitment to a social or humane end. With a realistic and sincere sense of resolve, we must say that all our children shall eat well.

B. There must be a similarly resolute commitment to the proposition that every adult shall have the means to obtain an adequate diet. Had we met, or were now to meet, the solemn promise of the Employment Act of 1946, this commitment would today be a reality for all except the permanently and temporarily unemployable:

> *Sec. 1021.* The Congress declares that it is the continuing policy and responsibility of the Federal Government to use all practicable means . . . for the purpose of creating and maintaining . . . conditions under which there will be afforded useful employment opportunities, including self-employment, for those able, willing, and seeking to work, and to promote maximum employment, production, and purchasing power.
>
> *Sec. 1022.* (a) The President shall transmit to the Congress not later than January 20 of each year an economic report setting forth . . . a program for carrying out the policy declared in section 1021 of this title, together with such recommendations for legislation as he may deem necessary or desirable.

This is an unkept promise, and, above all, America must take seriously its promises to itself, for otherwise there can be no national self-respect. When we speak here of a resolve that every adult be enabled to provide food for himself and his dependents, we are asking the nation not merely to make, but to keep, its promises.

* * *

To these ends, we propose the following. We do so, however, not in the spirit of insisting on the specifics of any single program, but rather in the spirit of saying that no measures of less seriousness than these we propose here will, we believe, accomplish what must be done. The governmental study of hunger and malnutrition now underway and ably directed by the U. S. Public Health Service will give good counsel, and in particular, will provide further guidance to the program needs we have addressed ourselves to by Recommendations II to XIV below. But that study cannot realistically be expected to be completed before the close of 1968, at the earliest, and there is an emergency now and the need for emergency action.

I

Because one-fifth of the households of the United States have diets determined by the U. S. Department of Agriculture to be "poor";

Because in households of low income levels, 36 percent subsist on "poor" diets;

Because the Department of Agriculture has found that the diet of Americans has deteriorated since 1955;

Because our study has shown that there are 280 counties of the United States in which conditions are so distressed as to warrant a Presidential declaration naming them as hunger areas, and these counties have been named and sufficiently described in this report;

Because all evidence indicates that the worst of all health conditions exist among migrant farm laborers and on some Indian reservations;

Because evidence mounts that diet deficiencies in early childhood cause irreversible organic and psychological brain damage;

Because a civilized people, that has the means, does not wait for famine and mass starvation in order to protect its children and its weak;

And, finally, because the very existence of the conditions found by the Department of Agriculture, as well as our study, is conclusive evidence that existing federal food programs are terribly insufficient.

We call upon the President to:

—declare that a national emergency exists;

—institute emergency food programs within these 280 hunger counties, at migrant farm camps, and, after consultation with tribal councils, on selected Indian reservations; all this to be done as the first earnest effort of a national resolve to dispel hunger;

—use all available statutory authority and fund, including that under Section 32, P.L. 320 74th Congress customs receipts; under emergency food and medical appropriations (receipts) for the Office of Economic Opportunity, and under the 1967 Social Security Amendments providing for federal participation to needy families with children in order to assure completely adequate food programs in these counties;

—ask Congress for immediate enactment of such other powers and appropriations as he needs;

—use also in these places the authority and funds provided under the federal food programs, to the extent that doing so will not take funds away from other areas;

—report to the people by September 1968 the numbers of needy people reached in these counties, the number yet unreached (if there be any) and the nutritional adequacy of the diets provided for all these programs;

—report, at the same time, plans for longer range programs.

* * *

In our view, those longer range programs must embrace provisions as comprehensive and as concrete as the following:

* * *

II

Federal food programs should be available to the needy of every locality and should not depend on local or state option. State and/or local governments should be able, however, to pre-empt administration of the food program on presentation of certifiable plans, and within the federal programs there should be, in fact, some financial inducement to encourage them to do so. No such plan should be approved, however, until well advertised public hearings, at times and places convenient to probable beneficiaries, have been held, and no plan should be certified that does not include an expeditious procedure for appeals by a person from a state or local action to the designated federal authority, which should be, we think, either the Office of Economic Opportunity or the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

III

The basic federal food program should be the free Food Stamp Program, as described below. The commodity distribution program should be solely a surplus distribution program, providing surplus commodities, when available, to food stamp holders at prices well below prevailing retail prices. As is now the case, commodities should also be made available to certain hospitals and other organized institutions.

IV

Eligibility for food stamps should be keyed to income, dependents, and medical expenses. The formula, in the first place, should be based on the resolve that diets meeting the current standards of the Recommended Daily Allowance shall be made obtainable. This formula, in the second place, should bear some negative relationship to the same factors of the federal income tax.

V

At levels set by law, persons should become eligible for varying quantities of stamps without further investigation. We think all heads of households or non-dependent adult individuals should be required to file a simplified federal income tax return (to so require would, obviously, necessitate that free and dignified assistance, through the Post Office or other agency, be made available to those unable to do the chore themselves). A perforated voucher could be attached to the return, and the eligible individual could simply present it, after endorsement by the official receiving his income tax return, to the designated food stamp official in order to receive his stamps. Enforcement of truth-telling would rest — as with the income tax — with the Internal Revenue Service, using sample checks.

VI

An eligible person should, therefore, receive more or fewer stamps depending on need. Since the criterion is need, there would be, consequently, no reason that the recipient pay anything at all for the stamps to which he or she is entitled.

VII

A readily accessible means of reporting negative changes should be provided, so that a person becoming, for example, unemployed or incurring heavy medical costs, can establish or enlarge his eligibility during a year. Again, an affidavit system should be used, with truth-telling enforced by the Internal Revenue Service.

VIII

The aim being to achieve adequate diets, the law should recognize the special dietary needs of pregnant women, the aged, infants, the sick, and perhaps others. Such persons should have their stamps adjusted upwards in monetary value, and this could be done most simply on the basis of a physician's or public health nurse's endorsement.

IX

In furtherance of the resolve that every child have an adequate diet, we believe that school lunches should be available to every child enrolled in public, private, or parochial schools, up to and including 12th grade, as well as in kindergarten, Headstart or other pre-school centers, nursery school, and day care centers. The lunches would have to conform to federal nutritional standards. The partnership between the federal, state, and local authorities might well be on the basis of the federal government providing all the food, with states and local authorities administering the program (subject to an approved federal plan, which, as above, contains an appeal procedure and is adopted only after hearings), and absorbing all administrative costs (including that of transportation and storage of food within the state). State and/or local participation should be encouraged by effective use of such devices as tax offsets or reduced grants-in-aid.

If other social purposes of government require that families who can afford to pay for lunches do so, then such payment should be provided for in a way that respects the sensitivities of children and their parents, and is administratively simple. To this end, we suggest consideration of a system of non-transferable lunch stamps which would be the only currency acceptable for federally supplied lunches, which would go to food stamp recipients along with their other stamps and which could be purchased by other parents at the issuing office.

X

School lunches could appropriately be used for prudent experiments with the palatability and nutritional effectiveness of so-called fortified foods; if children found a liking for them, a market for those of proven nutritional value might develop.

XI

Either the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare or the Office of Economic Opportunity should be directed and funded to employ and soundly train a large number of food stamp recipients (perhaps in a ratio of one trainee to every 50 recipients) as nutrition and health care extension workers among the poor. Again, the states or local governments should be encouraged by some financial inducement to pre-empt this program on submission of a certifiable plan, approved after public hearing.

XII

Until such time as the President is able to report to the country that no households (or only an insignificant number) have diets that fall below the Department of Agriculture's criterion of "good", and that federal assistance is no longer a factor in keeping them at that level, custom receipts under Section 32 should be made available as required to supplement other appropriations for the food needs of the poor.

XIII

Medical, graduate, and nursing schools now give astonishingly little attention to the diagnosis and treatment of malnutrition, or to an understanding of its causes and effects. They should give much more, and the federal government and foundations should finance at the schools and in their own centers far more research and training in this area.

XIV

Finally, we do hope and urge that private organizations concerned with human welfare will address themselves to this most elemental of all of humanity's problems and that each will find within its purposes and resources its own distinctive contribution; and that all these organizations will, as part of their contribution, continuously monitor and evaluate governmental programs. To this end, and as a first step, we shall ourselves distribute our principal findings and our recommendations to groups representative of the nation's poor.

Appendix 4

Table of Federal Food Assistance Programs

Name of Program	Act (and Section)	Brief Description	Who Administers	State Matching Requirement
1) Food Stamps	Food Stamp Act of 1964 (substantially revised in 1970-1)	Sale of varying amount of coupons (according to family size) exchangeable for non-imported foodstuffs in return for cash outlay dependent upon purchasing household's income	FNS,* USDA: State and county welfare agencies	Coupons-None Cost of coupon issuance 100% Cost of certification for program of non-public public assistance recipients, outreach and fair hearings 32.5%
2) Commodity Distribution				
a) Section 32	Section 32 of Public Law 74-320 (Act of August 24, 1935)	Purchase by Secretary of surplus commodities and subsequent distribution to needy individuals	C&MS,** USDA: State commodity distribution agencies (educational agencies, agricultural bureaus, welfare agencies)	Commodities-None Warehousing, intrastate transportation, non-public assistance recipient's certification 100%
b) Price-support acquisition	Section 416 of Agricultural Act of 1949	Purchase oy Commodity Credit Corporation of commodities to maintain price	As in 2a)	As in 2a)
c) Dairy products	Section 709, Food and Agriculture Act of 1965	Purchase by Commodity Credit Corporation of dairy products, other than fluid milk, for distribution to needy households	As in 2a)	As in 2a)
3) Nutritional supplements	Each year's Agricultural Appropriations Act	Distribution of allotment of commodities to pregnant and nursing women and small children	C&MS, USDA: County health offices and Welfare agencies	Commodities-None Warehousing, intrastate transportation, and certification 100%
4) Food Certificates	As in 3)	Free supply of $10 of coupons per pregnant/nursing woman and $5 per child under one exchangeable for milk, formula, baby cereal	FNS, USDA: Five county health offices and welfare agencies	None
5) Emergency Food and Medical Services	Economic Opportunity Act Section 222 (a) (5)	Funds to furnish food services to the malnourished poor by support of any existing food program and/or creation of new ones	Office of Economic Opportunity's Office of Health Affairs: Community action agencies	20% in cash or kind, unless Director of Office of Economic Opportunity lowers
6) General Assistance a) Public Schools	NSLA*** - Section 4	Across-the-board cash assistance for lunches in all participating schools (average contribution of 8¢ each lunch)	FNS, USDA: State educational agencies to school districts	$3 state for every $1 Federal, but "state" includes children's payments, but 6% must come from state revenues (18 state cents to every Federal $1) by fiscal 1974
b) Private Schools	NSLA - Section 10	Withholding of funds for non-profit private schools in 26 states	FNS, USDA: Regional offices to school districts	$3 from sources within the state expended by private schools in state to every $1 Federal
7) Special Assistance a) Public Schools	NSLA - Section 11	Special cash grants to assure receipt of lunch by needy children at whatever school they attend (average contribution of 42¢ each lunch, including funds from 8 below)	FNS, USDA: State educational agencies to school districts	None - school can receive up to 100% of cost of serving meal or Secretary's maximum reimbursement rate, whichever is lower

*FNS—Food and Nutrition Service
**C&MS—Consumer and Marketing Service
***NSLA—National School Lunch Act

Name of Program	Act and Section	Brief Description	Who Administers	State Matching
b) Private Schools	NSLA - Section 11	Withholding of funds for non-profit private schools in 26 states	FNS, USDA: Regional offices to school districts	As in 7a)
8) Special Section 32 a) Public Schools	Each year's Agriculture Appropriations Act	Money alloted to states for use in feeding needy children through provision of lunch, breakfast, and/or state administrative expenses	FNS, USDA: State educational agencies to school districts	As in 7a)
b) Private Schools	Each year's Agriculture Appropriations Act	Withholding of funds for nonprofit private schools in 26 states	FNS, USDA: Regional offices to school districts	None
9) School Breakfast a) Public Schools	CNA* - 4(a)	Across-the-board cash assistance for breakfasts in schools drawing attendance from poor areas or to which a substantial portion of pupils must travel long distances (average contribution of 15¢ each breakfast)	FNS, USDA: State educational agencies to school districts	Minimum of none of operating costs in needy areas; maximum of 100% of non-food costs plus food costs less Federal reimbursement
b) Private Schools	CNA - 4(f)	Withholding of funds for nonprofit private schools in 26 states	FNS, USDA: Regional offices to school districts	As in 9a)
10) Nonfood Assistance a) Public Schools	CNA - 5(a)	Aid for buying or renting food service equipment for schools drawing attendance from poor areas	FNS, USDA: State educational agencies to school districts	25% from state or local funds
b) Private Schools	CNA - 5(d)	Withholding of funds for nonprofit private schools in 26 states	FNS, USDA: Regional offices to school districts	None
11) Special Food Service Program a) Public Service Institutions	NSLA - Section 13(a)	Cash aid to non-profit food service programs for meals or food service equipment (25% limit) for children in day-care centers, settlement houses, recreation centers, etc., which provide day-care for children from poor areas or areas with high concentrations of working mothers	FNS, USDA: State educational agencies to school districts	Food service - none, but minimum of 20% of cost of serving food; maximum of non-food costs. Equipment assistance - 25% from non-Federal source
b) Private Service Institutions	NSLA - Section 13(d)	Funds for same programs in non-profit private service institutions in 32 states	FNS, USDA: Regional offices to school districts	As in 11a)
12) Special Milk Program a) Public Schools	CNA - Section 3	Cash assistance to lower price of milk in schools and service institutions	FNS, USDA: State educational agencies to school districts	None
b) Private Schools	CNA - Section 3	Withholding of funds for non-profit private schools in 31 states and for nonprofit private child care institutions in 32 states	FNS, USDA: Regional offices to school districts	None
13) Federal Administrative Expenses	NSLA - Section 6	Funds for Secretary's expenses in administering NSLA and CNA programs	FNS, USDA	None

*CNA—Child Nutrition Act

Name of Program	Act and Section	Brief Description	Who Administers	State Matching
14) State Administrative Expenses	CNA - Section 7	Funds for state educational agencies and commodity distribution agencies for their administrative expenses in supervising and giving technical assistance to local school districts and service institutions for all CNA programs and NSLA special assistance and special food service for children programs	FNS, USDA: State educational agencies and commodity distribution agencies	100% less Federal contribution under this program
15) Commodities a) Section 6	NSLA - Section 6	Purchase by Secretary of highly nutritious commodities for distribution to schools and service institutions (provides average contribution of 7¢ each lunch together with funds from b), c) and d) below)	C&MS, USDA: State educational agencies or commodity distribution agencies to school districts	Commodities - None Warehousing, intrastate transportation, and processing - 100%
b) Section 32	Section 32 of P.L. 74-320 (Act of August 24, 1935)	Purchase by Secretary of surplus commodities followed by donations to schools and service institutions	C&MS, USDA: State educational agencies or agencies or commodity distribution agencies to school districts	As in 15a)
c) Section 416	Section 416 Agricultural Act of 1949	Price-support acquisition by Commodity Credit Corporation of commodities and donations to school lunch program	CCC* and C&MS, USDA: State educational agencies or commodity distribution agencies to school districts	As in 15a)
d) Commodities-Section 709	Section 709 Food and Agriculture Act of 1965	Purchase by Commodity Credit Corporation of dairy products, other than fluid milk, to meet requirements of school programs	CCC and C&MS, USDA: State educational agencies or commodity distribution agencies to school districts	As in 15a)
16) Surveys and Studies	NSLA—Section 6 (3)	Funds for Secretary to commission surveys and studies of food service program requirements either through grants to states or other means (contracts with other groups)	FNS, USDA: State educational agencies or other public or private organizations, including school districts	None
17) Training	NSLA—Section 6 (3)	Funds for Secretary to provide nutritional training and education for food service workers, cooperators and participants either through grants to states or other means	FNS, USDA: State educational agencies or other public or private organizations, including school districts	None
18) Special Developmental Projects	CNA—Section 10	Funds for each state to use for pilot projects to improve methods and facilities for providing food service to children	State educational agencies	None—but really state is grantor
19) Title 1 Elementary and Secondary Education Act	ESEA**—Sections 101 and 105	Financial assistance to local educational agencies serving areas with high concentrations of educationally disadvantaged children, including food service programs	OE***, HEW**** State and local educational agencies to school districts	None

*CCC—Commodity Credit Corporation
**ESEA—Elementary and Secondary Education Act
***OE—Office of Education
****HEW—Department of Health, Education and Welfare

Name of Program	Act and Section	Brief Description	Who Administers	State Matching
20) Migrant Children	ESEA—Section 103(a)(6)	Financial assistance for establishing or improving programs for migratory children of migratory agricultural workers, including food service	OE, HEW: State and local educational agencies	None
21) Handicapped Children	ESEA—Section 103(a)(5)	Grants by Secretary to states responsible for providing public education for handicapped children, including food service	OE, HEW: State educational agencies	None
22) School Nutrition Demonstration Projects	ESEA—Section 808	Grants by Secretary to support demonstration projects designed to improve nutrition and health services in schools serving poor children	OE, HEW: Local educational agencies or non-profit private educational organizations	None
23) Head Start	EOA*—Section 222 (a)(1)	Comprehensive educational-nutritional services for poor children below compulsory school attendance age (3, 4, and 5)—pre-Nov. 1969 programs only; post-Nov. can obtain from 11	OCD**, HEW: Local educational agencies and community action programs	20% in cash or kind, unless Director of OEO lowers
24) Follow Through	EOA—Section 222 (a)(2)	Comprehensive educational-nutritional services for poor children in kindergarten through third grade	OCD, HEW: Local educational agencies	20% in cash or kind, unless Director of OEO lowers
25) Indian Children	Johnson-O'Malley Act Public Law 73-167, as amended	Funds supplied to local educational agencies to meet special needs of Indian children not met under other Federal programs, including malnutrition	Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of Interior: Local educational agencies	None
26) Model Cities	Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966—Section 103	Funds supplied to model cities to support comprehensive attack on area's physical and social problems, including malnutrition	Model Cities and Governmental Relations, HUD:*** Community development agencies	20% of cost of carrying out Federal grant-in-aid programs in conjunction with Model Cities
27) Social Services	Social Security Act-Section 402(a)(14) (15) and 403(3)(a)	Funds for social services to recipients of and applicants for public assistance, including food service if deemed necessary to foster child development and assure employment potential, under an approved state plan	Social and Rehabilitation Service, HEW: State welfare agencies	$3 Federal for every $1 state

*EOA—Economic Opportunity Act
**OCD—Office of Child Development
***HUD—Housing and Urban Development